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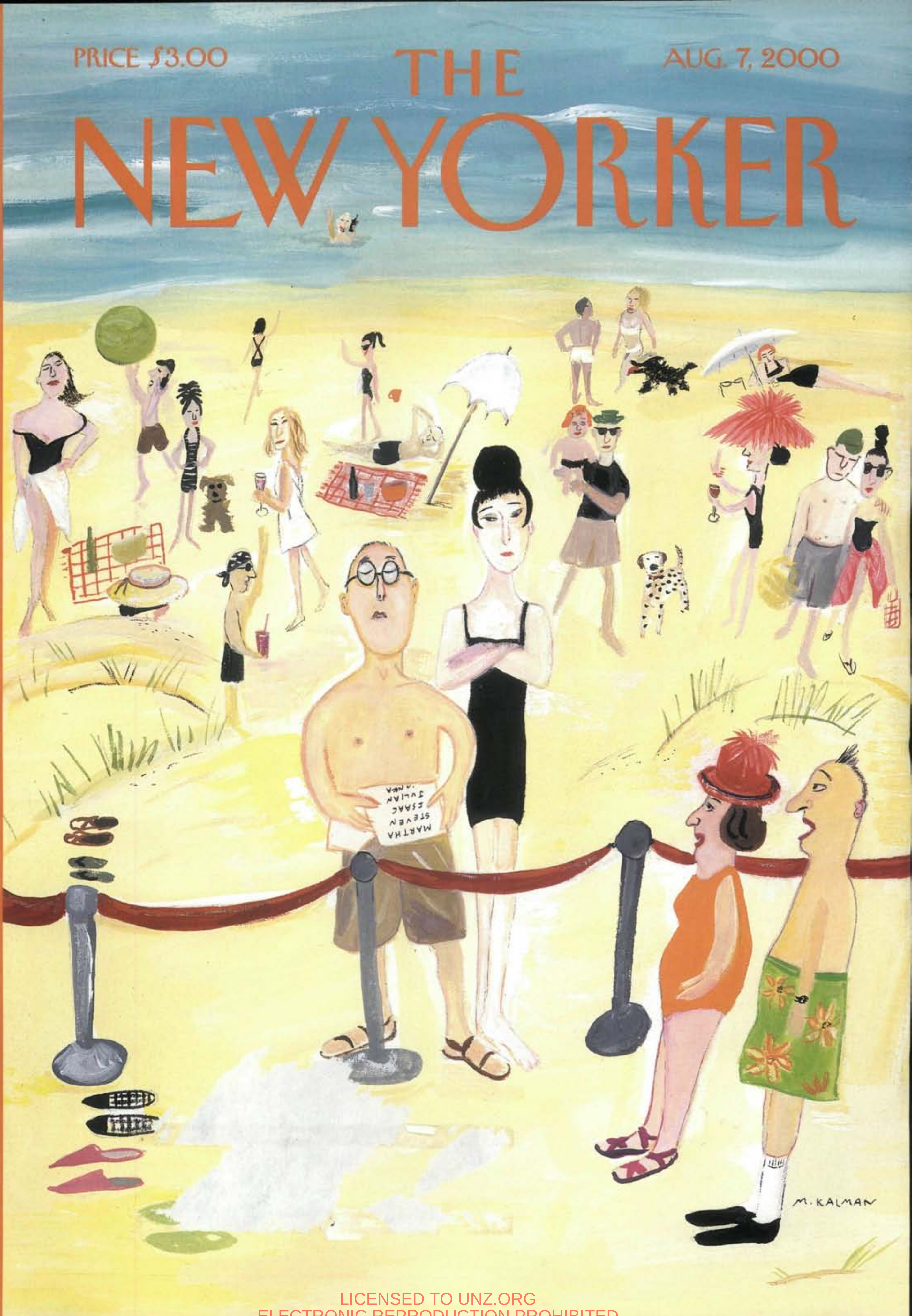
AUG. 7, 2000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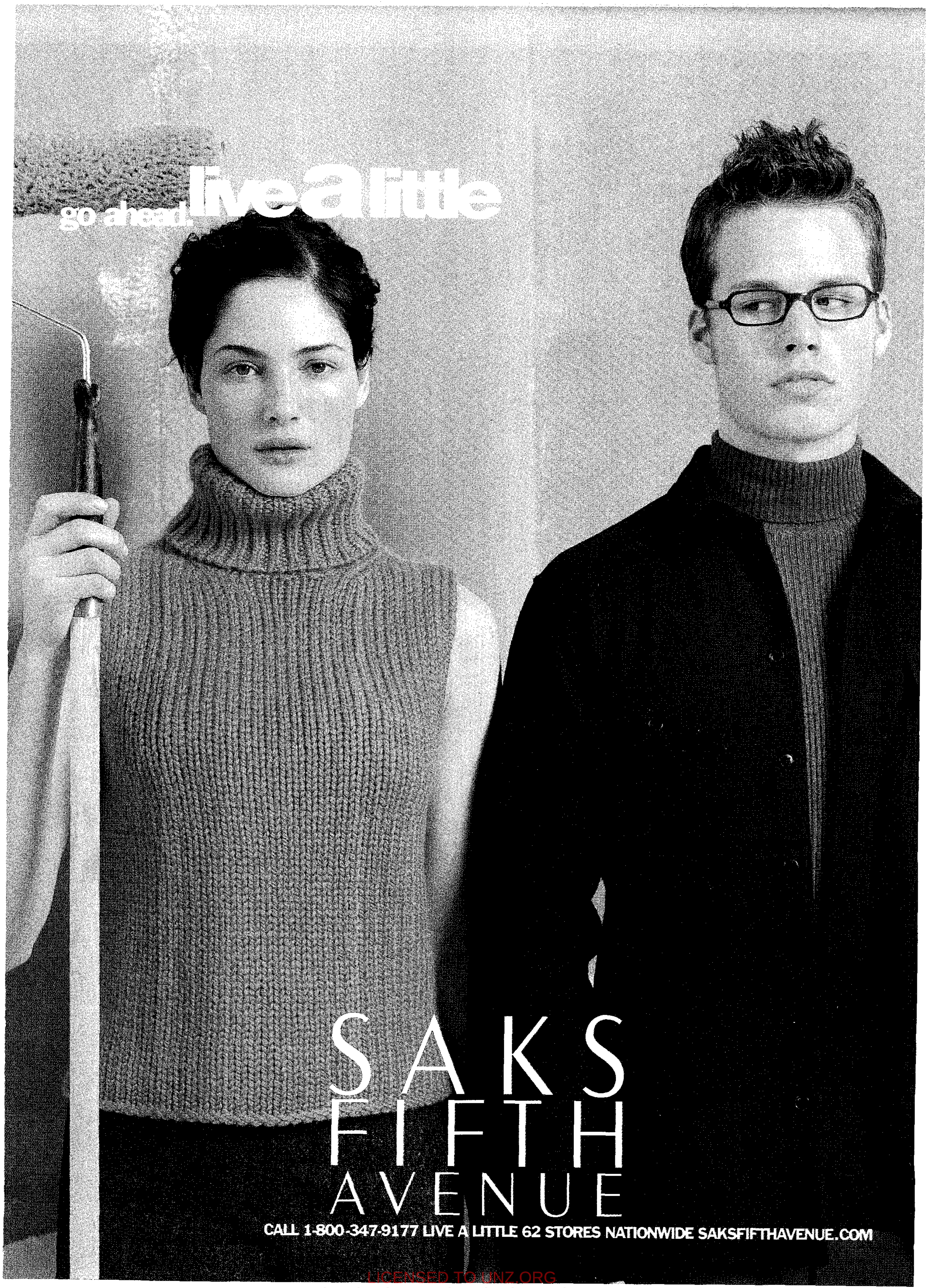
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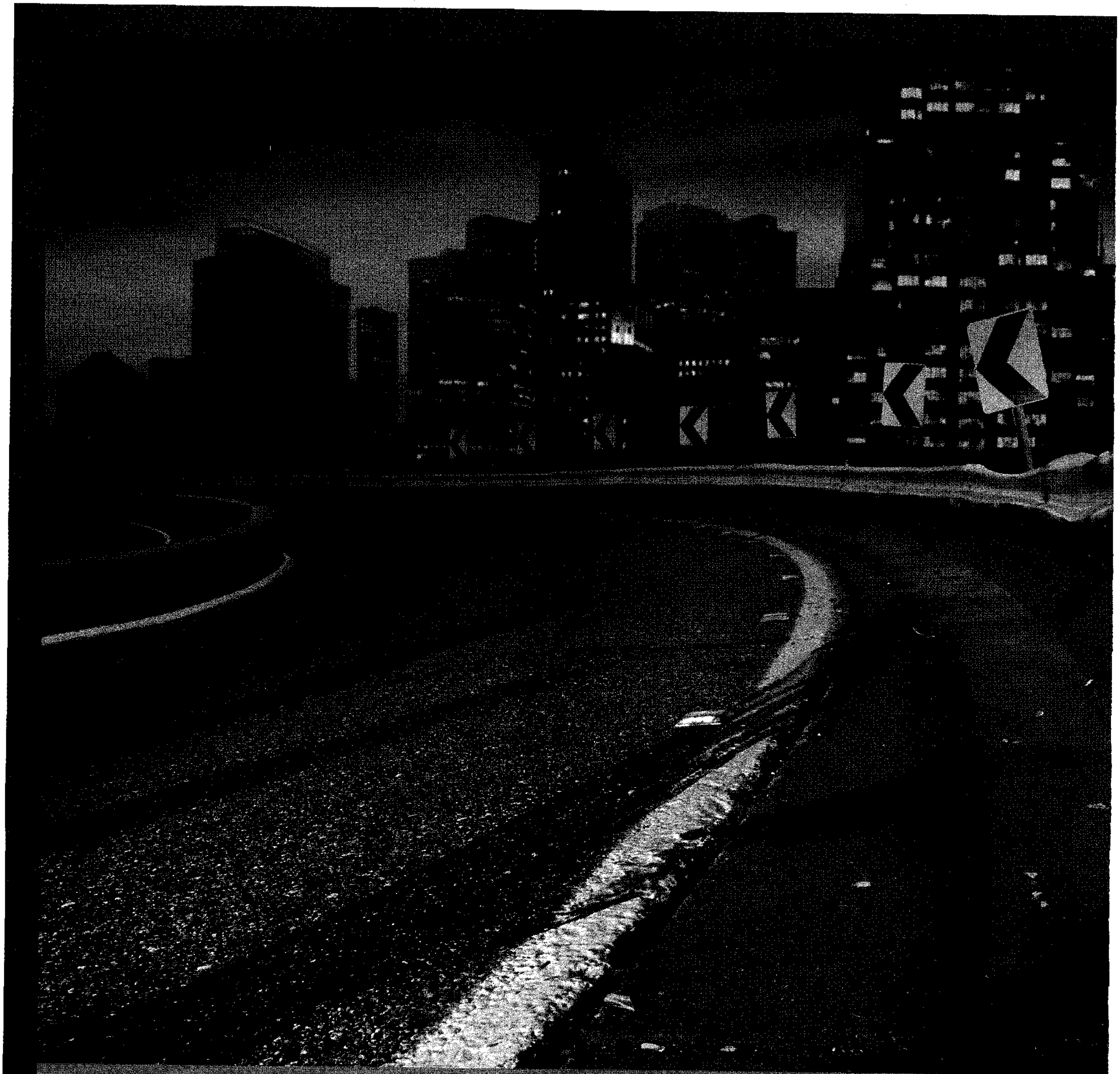

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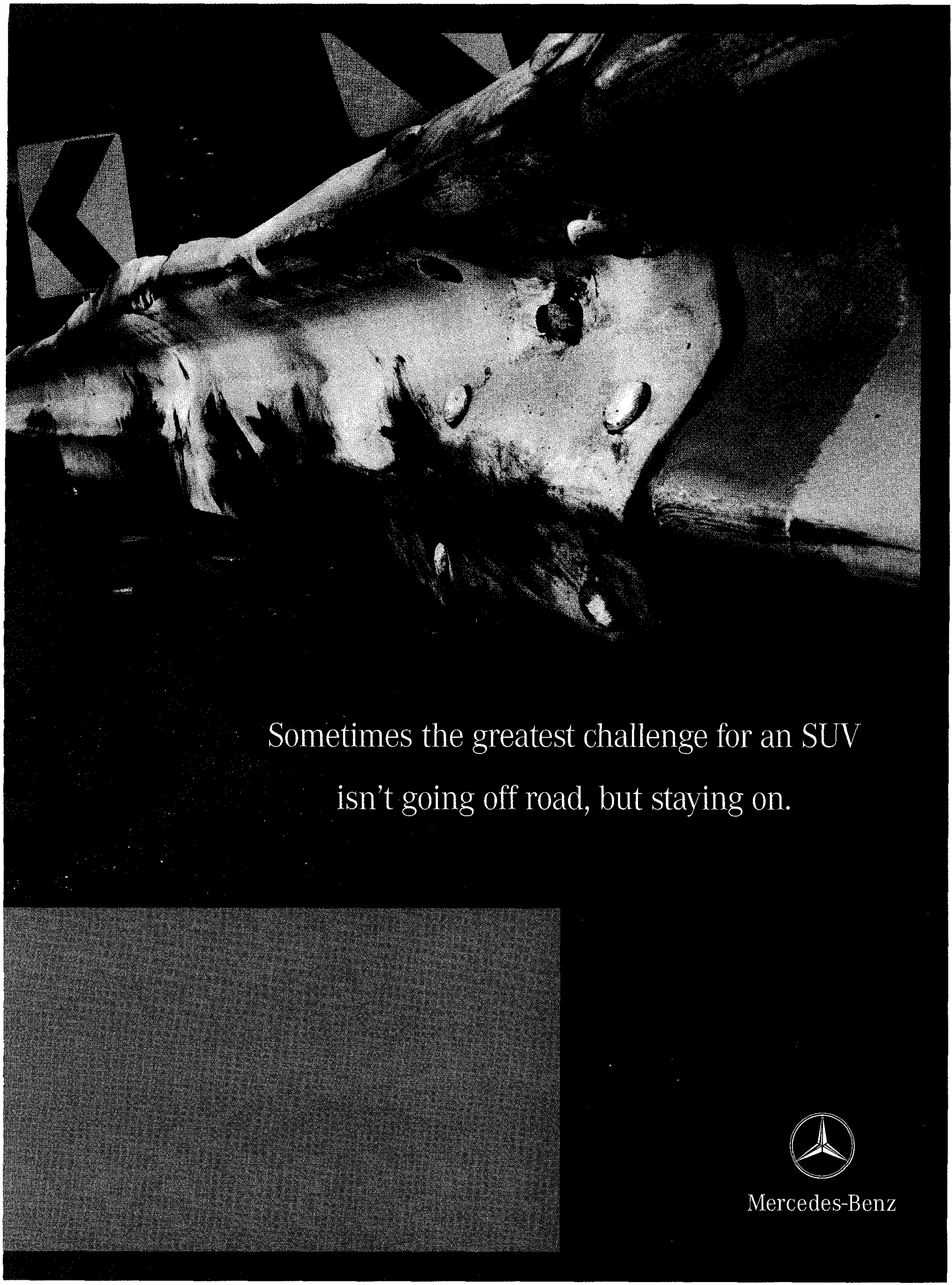
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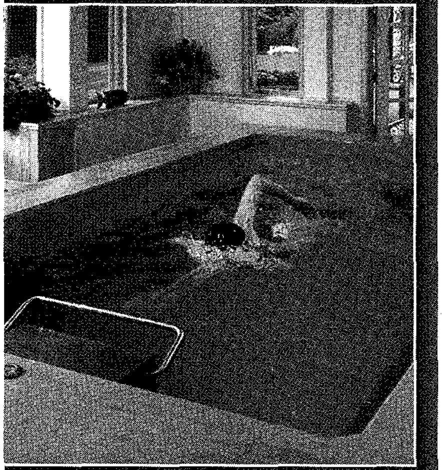

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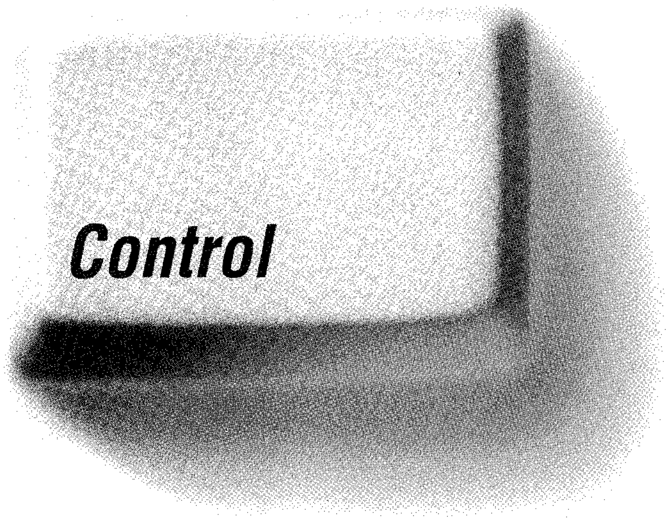

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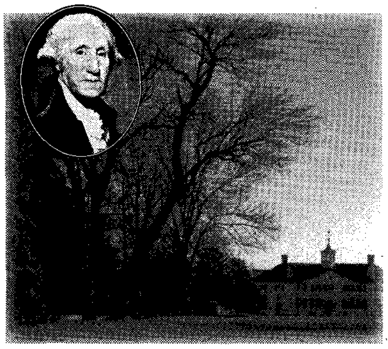

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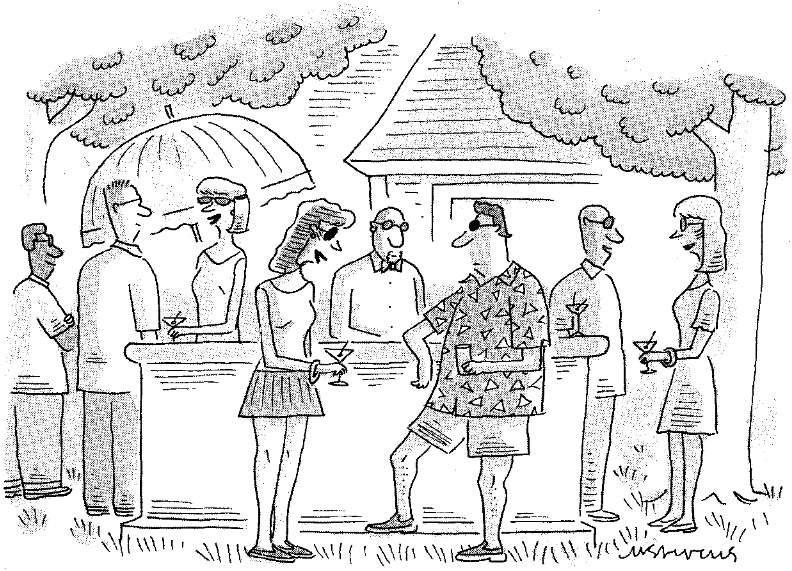

"Funny. I never thought of you as having legs."

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THE MAIL

THE BOYS FROM LONG ISLAND

Like the Nazi hunter in the movie "The Boys from Brazil," who came to the conclusion that you couldn't kill a youthful clone of Adolf Hitler merely because he might commit an evil act in the future, I believe that just because an individual is related to Hitler doesn't mean he's hopelessly tainted and we have no right to invade his privacy. Based on Timothy W. Ryback's "Hitler's Lost Family" (July 17th), Hitler didn't even care much about his siblings, nieces, and nephews, and considered them a bunch of losers. Therefore tracking them down serves no useful purpose. It certainly won't enlighten us about what shaped and motivated Hitler—that was tied more directly to the times in which he lived, and to his unique life experiences, than to heredity.

Kenneth L. Zimmerman
Huntington Beach, Calif.

SOYBEANS VS. GOLD

In "Gold People" (July 17th), James Collins opines that "it seems that no matter what you bought in 1980 your investment would have increased in value by the year 2000." Last year, the prices of bedrock commodities of American agriculture such as wheat and soybeans broke twenty-five-year lows, a record that even gold has not yet attained. Does this mean that farmers are also "eccentric losers in the new economy," or is it possible that economic cycles are still valid and that commodities in general (and gold in particular) are at the same point that the Dow Jones was in 1980?

Greg Pickup
Chicago, Ill.

FICTION'S GIFTS

Judith Greenberg's reaction (The Mail, July 10th) to Akhil Sharma's short story "Prosperity" moves me to say that, as hard as it was to read, Sharma's blunt, exacting, literary expression is a blessing to anyone who has suffered, as I have, at the hands of a man of similar bent as the fictional father. I applaud Sharma's ability to convey, to those who cannot understand how these things happen, exactly how they do happen. His work is not "a how-to manual for pedophiles"; it is a gift of literature, a confirmation that the victim is not to blame.

Catharine MacIntosh
Washington, D.C.

THE MONEY OF NATURE

André Aciman, in "Arbitrage" (July 10th), employs a financial metaphor to describe Wordsworth's use of memory in "Tintern Abbey." The poet Donald Hall once argued that Wordsworth himself employed a similar metaphor, in "The Daffodils." Hall notes that Wordsworth characterizes the flowers by quantity and golden color, and describes them with metallic adjectives, such as "shine" and "twinkle." In the last stanza, the sight of the daffodils is compared to capital, which provided Wordsworth with interest in the form of memory. Hall's explanation was that Wordsworth wanted to forget that "prosperity derives from exploitation," but that subconsciously he couldn't, so he lauded nature in financial terms.

Elaine Bender
Torrance, Calif.

THE BUSHES' NEW HOME

In The Talk of the Town (July 24th), Andrew Blum reports that George W. and Laura Bush are about to build a "green" house. What surprises me is that "architects who are concerned about the environment" could consider any weekend property to be environmentally friendly. Whether the Bushes recycle their toilet water or not, the most environmentally friendly thing for them to do would be somehow to get along with just one home.

Eddie Allen
Trempealeau, Wis.

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Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

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HIGH INFIDELITY
In John Dooley's comedy, John Davidson and Morgan Fairchild star as a Presidential candidate and his wife, who are forced to participate in marriage counselling by their political party. Two previews on Aug. 2. Opens Aug. 3 at 8. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIDA
Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

THE AMERICAN LIVING ROOM
The performance space HERE's summer festival, highlighting the work of thirty-nine emerging directors. (145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. For tickets and information, call 647-0202.)

AQUILA THEATRE COMPANY
The British-American touring troupe is in town for the summer, presenting repertory performances of "The Iliad" and "The Comedy of Errors" through Aug. 6. The residency continues through Sept. 17. (Hemmerdinger Hall, 100 Washington Sq. E. 307-4100.)

AVOW
A progressive priest refuses to preside over the wedding of two gay men, in a new drama by Bill C. Davis ("Mass Appeal"). (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

BAAL
The Bat Theatre Company's version of Brecht's first play. (The Flea, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407.)

CAPITOL STEPS
The musical-theatre troupe's latest political satire, "It Ain't Over 'Til the First Lady Sings." (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO CITY LIMITS
The improv company presents a new revue, "Chicago City Limits Turns 20: Now and Forever . . . and We Mean It." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. 888-5233.)

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CONTACT
The director and choreographer Susan Stroman's dance play, a triptych of simple stories about the various forms of human connection and the atmosphere of longing, is a big-hearted, witty crowd-pleaser. (10/18 & 10/25/99) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

COPENHAGEN
Michael Frayn's play speculates on the controversial 1941 reunion of the two giants of quantum mechanics—the physicists Niels Bohr (Philip Bosco) and Werner Heisenberg (Michael Cumpsty). It is so meticulous, so admirable, and so grave that you want to tousle its well-kempt appearance and tell it to lighten up. Nevertheless, the director, Michael Blakemore, manages to make dynamic and suggestive an evening that consists of three actors (Blair Brown plays Margrethe Bohr) and three chairs. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE CRUMPLE ZONE
A dark comedy by Buddy Thomas, set during a Christmas gathering of five gay men. (Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. 206-1515.)

DIRTY BLONDE
Mae West's flirty and dirty persona is the subject of a cunningly written, raffish evening conceived by the writer-actress Claudia Shear and the director James Lapine. Mae's story is recounted with brio by two fans—Jo (Shear, who doubles winningly as Mae) and Charlie (Tom Riis Farrell). The success of the play rests not on the louche facts of West's life but on the intersection of her story with the sweetness of the evolving relationship between the two lost souls who narrate it. (2/7/00) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF
Ntozake Shange's 1974 choreopoem, directed by George Faison. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 16.)

GODSPELL
An updated version of the 1971 rock musical, with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200.)

GREAT BLACK ONE-ACTS
A festival of plays by black writers, staged by Woodie King, Jr.,'s National Black Touring Circuit. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 353-1176. Closes Aug. 6.)

HIP-HOP THEATRE FESTIVAL
Two one-woman shows: "Surface Transit," by Sarah Jones, who portrays eight urban characters, and "Sistah Supreme," an autobiographical piece by Liza Colón-Zayas. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ICE FACTORY FESTIVAL 2000
Soho Think Tank's summer shindig highlighting new works continues with "Human Collision/Atomic Reaction," an examination of the relationship between the laws of physics and human interactions, by the Other Theatre. Aug. 2-5 at 7. The festival continues through Aug. 12. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

THE JERUSALEM SYNDROME
The comedian Marc Maron's autobiographical one-man show about his search for religious meaning, which took him to Kerouac's grave, Hollywood, the Philip Morris plant, and Israel. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
This misguided Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1971 musical version of the Saviour's last days on earth starts out by asking the tantalizing question "What's the buzz?" but never delivers a theatrically satisfying answer. Still, with its archaic whiff of right-wing outrage and its singable seventies-rock score, it's fun for nostalgia's sake. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

JESUS HOPPED THE A TRAIN
A man is imprisoned for murdering a cult leader, in a comedy-drama by Stephen Adly Guirgis. Philip Seymour Hoffman, recently seen in "True West," is the director. (Center Stage, 48 W. 21st St. 929-2228. Closes Aug. 12.)

JITNEY
August Wilson's play is set in a car-service station in 1977, in a part of Pittsburgh which is being demolished faster than it's being renovated. In this atmosphere of decay, Wilson's characters struggle with themselves and with each other to find some hope, and some peace, amidst the rubble. The cast of nine wonderful actors hit perfect notes of collision and cohesion, and turn what might otherwise be a draggy experience (the play runs to nearly three hours) into a riveting and moving one. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

JOE FEARLESS (A FAN DANCE)
A great and irresistible idea—above-the-rim basketball choreographed for the stage—attached to a goofy melodrama, in which the title character loses his job, wife, kids, and even his TV as a result

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American TV Best Buy CompUSA Fry's Good Guys H.H. Gregg Office Depot OfficeMax Radio Shack Staples Vann's of his fanatical devotion to his team. The basketball overshadows the drama, which takes place smack in the middle of the games (literally: the alley-oop passes sail right over the TV-room couch). But the athlete-actors pull off Globetrotter high jinks right on cue, the cheerleaders dance with exaggerated licentiousness, and the accompanying jock interviews and talk-radio postmortems are both on target and hilariously over the top. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

THE LARAMIE PROJECT
A drama about the murder of gay-hate victim Matthew Shepard, written and directed by Moisés Kaufman. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER
The Roundabout's revival of Kaufman and Hart's evergreen 1939 satire of Hollywood and New York literary society is pure gold. Nathan Lane is back onstage where he belongs, playing Sheridan Whiteside, a noxiously pompous critic and radio personality who commandeers the bewildered family and staff of a staid Ohio household—where he slipped on ice at a dinner in his honor and ended up in a wheelchair. Lane is hilarious as he spins around the stage, dressed in an elegant smoking jacket and barking orders and insults between puffs of cigarette and international phone calls. The play itself is a model of comic construction and is chock-full of vintage stage business, which the excellent cast executes with gleeful nineteen-forties snap. Jean Smart, Byron Jennings, and Lewis J. Stadlen, as three famous personalities who pop in for a visit, are all brilliant. With terrific sets and costumes by Tony Walton and William Ivey Long, respectively. Jerry Zaks is the director. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

THE MUSIC MAN
A delightful revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical, directed by Susan Stroman and starring Craig Bierko, who is making his Broadway début in the role of Professor Harold Hill. The show hits us with the simplicity and seamlessness of a perfect fairy tale, and it puts music in its proper place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. (5/22/00) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

NEIL SIMON'S HOTEL SUITE
The setups for these reheated fragments from Simon's "Suite" plays have the feel of stale seventies sitcoms, but they rate high on the middle-aged crowd's Laff-O-Meter and capture, however unwittingly, the innocence and humor of decades past. The cast (Helen Carey, Randy Graff, Leigh Lawson, Ron Orbach, Charlie McWade, and Amanda Serkasevich) all shine in their own ways. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 10.)

NEVER SWIM ALONE
The Canadian playwright Daniel MacIvor's latest dark comedy—thirteen scenes concerned with the lifelong friendship of two men. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

THE REAL THING
Revived here with an excellent cast (especially Stephen Dillane) and subtle direction by David Leveaux, Tom Stoppard's 1984 drama remains the wittiest, sharpest look at that twisted thing called love to come around in decades. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 13.)

RIVERDANCE
The Irish troupe of dancers, singers, and musicians. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
John Travolta is not easy to replace, nor are the ashes of disco fever likely to reignite, as this show, based on the 1977 movie, demonstrates. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK(ING LOT)
Expanded Arts' sixth season of free outdoor Shakespeare continues with "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Municipal Parking Lot at Broome and Ludlow Sts. For information about reservations, which are required, call 358-5096. Closes Aug. 5.)

SPINNING INTO BUTTER
Rebecca Gilman's surprising, well-crafted play about a racist incident at a mostly white Vermont liberal-arts college, where, as one character puts it, "not being racist means you got along really well with your nanny." When someone pins a hate letter on the door of one of the school's only black students, the administration stumbles around in a comically paranoid, disturbing stupor, trying to keep the public-relations lid on and obliviously applying righteous public-forum Band-Aids to a gaping social wound. The drama is subtle yet more powerful than it seems at first: the audience never meets the wronged black student, and the only honest feelings about racial divisiveness are expressed out of range of the censoring ear of inept authority. Hope Davis, who delivers a genuinely troubled monologue as a dean of students, leads the fine cast. Daniel Sullivan is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SWING!
No plot, just a hot band, Olympic-class dancers, and major panties—this show, a tribute to swing and its dance counterpart, the Lindy (mother of the jitterbug), lives up to its name. Directed and choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE TAMIMG OF THE SHREW
The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's version. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575.)

WHEN THEY SPEAK OF RITA
Daisy B. Foote's drama, about a discontented housewife in rural New Hampshire. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-3052. Closes Aug. 6.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CATS
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE COUNTESS
Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY
Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.

FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

FULLY COMMITTED
Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

JEKYLL & HYDE
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

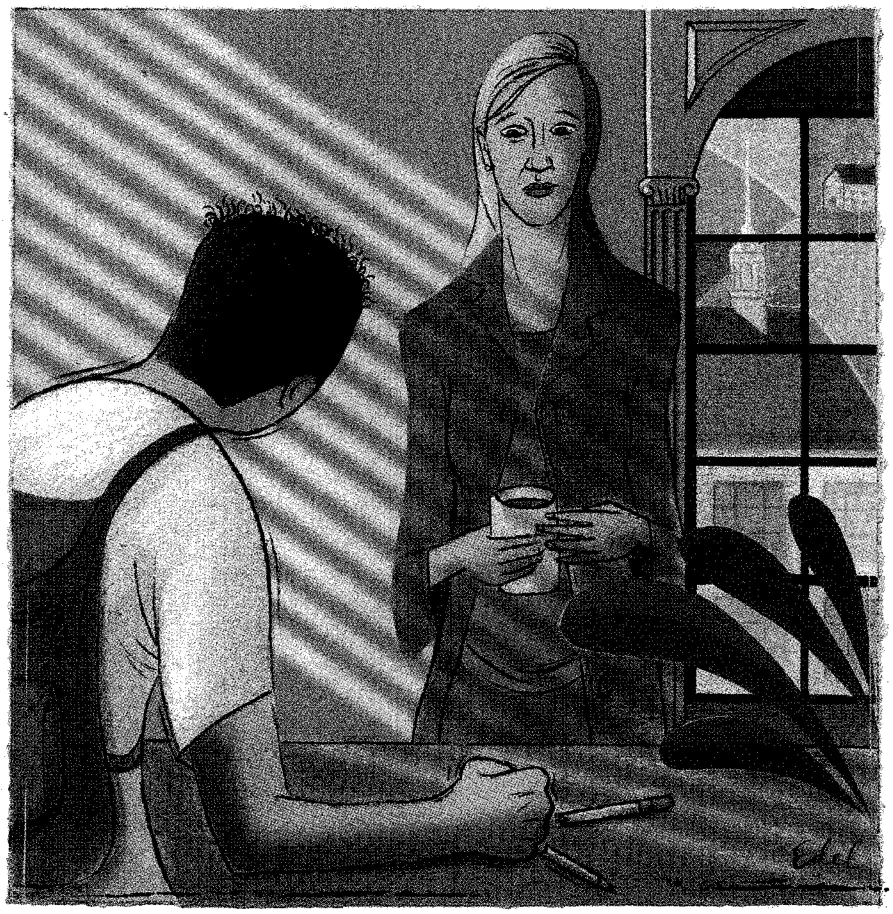
KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

MISS SAIGON
Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.



Jai Rodriguez and Hope Davis, in Rebecca Gilman's "Spinning Into Butter."

PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at
St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St.
239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

ELIOT FELD'S BALLET TECH
July 31-Aug. 1, Aug. 3, and Aug. 7 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Ion," "Yo Shakespeare," and "Doo Dah Day." ♦ Aug. 2, Aug. 4-5, and Aug. 8 at 8: "Skara Brae," "Circa," and "Paper Tiger." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Aug. 12.)

LINCOLN CENTER OUT-OF-DOORS FESTIVAL
This month's free alfresco performance festival includes generous helpings of dance. Aug. 5 from 2 to 6: Children can join in and dance with companies from Mexico (Estampas y Tradiciones), Korea (Korean Masked Dancing), and New York (Reginald Yates's Bantaba). (South Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 8 at 5:30: Estampas y Tradiciones. (Robertson Plaza.) ♦ Aug. 8 at 8: Parsons Dance Company. (Damrosch Park.) (For the complete festival schedule, call 875-5108. Through Aug. 27.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA
The eleven-member company, under the direction of Martin Santangelo, offers a new work ("La Plaza," in which competing flamenco stylists meet and trade steps at a marketplace) in addition to its satisfying repertory of traditional forms: the *alegrías, farrucas,* and, best of all, the *soleá,* performed by Soledad Barrio, who can transform the most demanding passages of percussive footwork into reflective turns of great sadness and introspection. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 279-4200. Aug. 1-5 at 8 and Aug. 6 at 5. Through Aug. 13.)

"SUMMER FEVER"
The choreographer Daniel Gwirtzman and his fourteen-member company present twelve works, including six premières (two of them odes to the disco era), in seventy-five minutes. (The Flea, 41 White St. 226-2407. Aug. 2-6 at 8. Through Aug. 19.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL
Aug. 1-4 at 8, Aug. 5 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 6 at 2: Mark Morris Dance Group. ♦ Aug. 3-4 at 8:15 and Aug. 5-6 at 5: Taylor 2. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

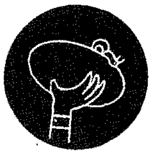
NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

TRACY CHAPMAN
It's been years since "Fast Car" turned this earnest folksinger into an overnight sensation. Successive records, for the most part, haven't had the commercial punch of the début; nevertheless, Chapman continues to release fine material that showcases her dusky vocals and her strong (if sometimes humorless) sense of justice: "Telling Stories" is her latest. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Aug. 1-2 at 8.)

TOTÓ LA MOMPOSINA / VERA BÍLÁ
A double bill of inspired female vocalists from opposite sides of the globe. La Momposina hails from coastal Colombia, and her voice is a fresh sea breeze; Bílá, from the Czech Republic, has been called the Ella Fitzgerald of Gypsy music. (Central Park SummerStage, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For more information, call 360-2777. Aug. 2 at 7:30.)

MAGNETIC FIELDS
Led by Stephin Merritt, one of New York's most respected underground artists and a reluctant antihero capable of both catchy melodies and dour bons mots, the Fields will perform songs from their latest release, the wildly eclectic three-disk set "69 Love Songs." (Castle Clinton, Battery Park. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 835-2789. Aug. 3 at 7.)

TABLES FOR TWO



EDEL RODRIGUEZ

LUPA
170 Thompson St. (982-5089)—The menu at this down-to-earth Greenwich Village osteria is printed in simple tourist Italian ("prosciutto di Parma with apricot mostarda") and glossed at the table by extraordinarily friendly American waiters ("Just coming over to give you some love and see if you have any questions"). The homegrown service blends nicely with the delicious vernacular fare, which is prepared Roman style from first-rate local ingredients.

But the place, which opened last October, is no secret: a long mid-week lunch in the sunny, open front room can feel like a Roman holiday, but at night, when the place fills up, the same spot seems more like the Circus Maximus. Bypass the roar up front and wait for something in the back, where any passing thoughts about the soppressata will be your own.

The affordable pastas are quiet masterpieces of timing and studied omission. The chef, Babbo veteran Mark Ladner, doesn't clutter his dishes with trendy ingredients—just strong, well-matched flavors. Ladner's take on the standard bucatini all'amatriciana is both gentle and distinctive; the thick, straw-shaped pasta comes in a sauce (guanciale, red onion, Italian parsley, and fresh tomatoes) that is sweet and summery. His sauce for the pappardelle al stracotto, a ragout of veal, beef, and pork, is chewy, gravy-thick, and tart.

After such primi, the secondi are mostly secondary. Still, the oxtail, in its lunchtime-sandwich version, is destination eating. Juices from the heaps of sautéed onions and crispy shredded meat sink into the thick, toasted bread squares—one Philly native admiringly compared it to his hometown cheese steak (minus the Cheez Whiz). And the dessert menu—which includes a marvellous cheese-plate option for diners on the extended plan—boasts perhaps the city's best tartufo (the chocolate-coated, ice-cream snowball hides a homemade Nutella-like sauce). (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $10-$16.)

—*Kevin Conley*

ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND
Formed in 1968, the Allmans have overcome deaths, drugs, and decades of a lack of interest in Southern rock, while managing to remain one of the industry's most profitable live acts. In what will no doubt go down as another classic chapter in their checkered history, the band recently fired the longtime guitarist and vocalist Dickie Betts ("creative differences" were cited as the official reason; Betts claimed that the band's actions implied that he has a drug problem, and threatened to sue). With the indefatigable **Hot Tuna.** (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-100. Aug. 4 at 7:30.)

ALI FARKA TOURE AND AFEL BOCOUM
A real treat. Mali native Toure brought his African blues to wider acclaim when "Talking Timbuktu," his 1994 duet CD with Ry Cooder, became something of a hit. Cooder has since moved on to Cuba and the "Buena Vista Social Club" projects; Toure will appear with countryman Bocoum, a singer and guitarist who's been recording with Toure since his 1991 CD, "The Source." (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Aug. 4 at 8.)

BODY & SOUL
This long-running, highly popular Sunday-afternoon house-music party moves uptown, bringing along d.j. **François K** and the fervent hard-bop and salsa-inflected rhythms of special guest pianist **Eddie Palmieri.** (Central Park SummerStage, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For more information, call 360-2777. Aug. 5 at 3.)

IRON MAIDEN
The cartoonish British metal act reunited with the guitarist Adrian Smith and the vocalist Bruce Dickinson for an acclaimed tour last year, and followed the tour with the surprisingly solid comeback record, "Brave New World." Now, they'll bring their metallic roar and tyrannosaurus-size riffs to town. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Aug. 5 at 7:30.)

SONNY ROLLINS
With a titan like Rollins, you pay your money and you take your chances—or, in this case, you show up for free and you take your chances. When the planets are aligned, Rollins is the most commanding improviser in jazz; when the cosmic balance is off, he can be the most frustrating. A part of the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival. (Damrosch Park Bandshell, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary. For more information, call 875-5108. Aug. 5 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
243 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—Aug. 8-9: The **Robert Cray Band.** Cray began the eighties as blues music's rising young star and ended the nineties as one of soul music's best-kept secrets; while his Memphis grooves and supple vocals sometimes stray too close to Al Green's territory, he continues to turn out fine albums that are mature without being stodgy. With **Duke Robillard.**

BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Aug. 6: **Mary Lou Lord,** perhaps the world's most successful subway busker.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.
73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Aug. 3: The **Holmes Brothers.** In their more than twenty-five years in the business, they have spent their time well, perfecting a mix of blues, soul, gospel, R. & B., and country which puts them head and shoulders above most younger acts.

THE COOLER
416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Aug. 5: **Antibalas,** a fourteen-piece multiracial Afro-beat ensemble from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, which takes its musical and political inspiration from Fela Kuti. Its shows are a thunderous mass of rhythms, horns, and bass.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Aug. 1-2: First-rate industrial noise with **Einstürzende Neubauten,** the seminal German band whose name translates as "collapsing buildings." ♦ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 2: **Dave Van Ronk.** A veteran of the early days of Greenwich Village's folk scene, Van Ronk is capable of marvellous finger-picking and rough, emotive vocals. Aug. 4: The music **Dr. Israel** (real name: Douglas Bennett) whips up in his Brooklyn studio is as mystifying and rewarding as your first trip on the New York City subway, and can deliver the same wild ride; the good doctor switches from mind-blowing break beats to power-guitar chords, sometimes on the same track.

MAKOR
35 W. 67th St. (601-1000)—Aug. 2: **Stacey Earle** and **Mark Stuart.** Earle, the hard-touring younger sister of alt-country-rocker Steve, comes to town with songs from "Dancin' with Them That Brung Me," her second album for Gearle Records, the label she and her husband, collaborator, and producer Stuart created two years ago. Earle's "people's music" is simple and stripped down on the surface, but rich at its heart, and sure to translate well into a live performance. Stuart opens with songs from his new album, "Songs from a Corner Stage."

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Aug. 6: **Dave Davies,** the less decorated half of the Kinks' decades-long sibling rivalry, has always supplied the band's guitar muscle, and even written some of their best-known songs ("Death of a Clown," for starters). In his new career as a front man, he sings a strong lead instead of high harmony, and he hasn't lost his way with a power chord.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Aug. 12: Singer **Daryl Sherman** and pianist **Dave McKenna** make beautiful music together; their recent recording, "Jubilee," pays tribute to Fred Astaire, Hoagy Carmichael, Noel Coward, and Duke Ellington (all born in 1899). Sherman takes her time with a lyric and manages to find contemporary resonance in everything from "Flying Down to Rio" to the stunning Ellington obscurity "It's Kind of Lonesome Tonight." McKenna, on the other hand, is the ultimate musician's musician, revered as an impeccable technician whose left hand is a world-class rhythm section in itself.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Aug. 2-3: **Peter Bernstein,** one of the more persuasive second-generation soul-jazz guitarists, has lent his bluesy energy to such venerable R. & B. players as Lou Donaldson. For these engagements, he'll be joined by **Brad Mehldau,** a highly decorated young pianist known more for his contemplative playing (which can sometimes verge on navel-gazing) than for his exuberance.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 6: **Albita,** the singer known as the Cuban Madonna. Dining.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Sept. 9: **Marc Salem's "Mind Games and All That Jazz."** Salem, a former New York University professor and a onetime researcher for "Sesame Street," moves his mind-reading act, which had a successful off-Broadway run a few years back, to this intimate cabaret space, adding an all-female trio to the show.

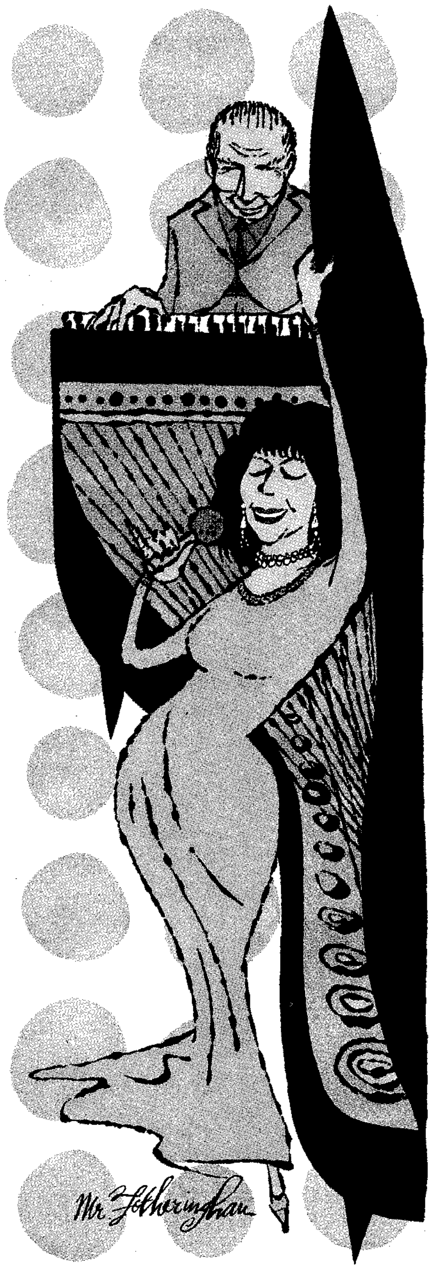
IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 6: The **Chris Potter** quartet. A tenorist whose lean melodicism can remind you of Joe Henderson at his craftiest, Potter employs his considerable technique in the service of music rather than spectacle. He also excels on soprano and alto saxophones and bass clarinet. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Aug. 6: The **Cindy Blackman** quartet. Blackman handles her drum kit with ferocious power, providing a batten-down-the-hatches rhythmic onslaught for saxophonist **Ravi Coltrane** (appearing with her Aug. 1-4) and guitarist **Vernon Reid** (Aug. 5-6). Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 6: The **Cedar Walton** trio. Pianist Walton has a touch of the old Clark Kent/Superman dichotomy: beneath his mild-mannered surface lies a player of steely power and intelligence. In a trio setting, his refined improvising, lucid and efficient, shines. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—Unlike his peers Boucher and Fragonard, Jean-Siméon Chardin devoted himself to simple still-lifes and domestic scenes, creamy works of such beauty that the philosopher Diderot was moved to write, "The magic is incomprehensible." The painter captures his human subjects in moments of quiet reverie, and the show, the first such retrospective to hit New York, casts a similar spell. The still-lifes contain a surprising amount of dead game (after all, the French for "still-life" is "*nature morte*"), and the most influential example, surely, is "The Ray." The gutted fish with the ghoulish grin inspired copies by Van Gogh and Cézanne; Soutine's variation on the theme is on view downstairs in the "Painters in Paris" show. But this early work, which earned the young artist membership in the prestigious Académie Royale, is a rare example of Chardin as showoff. On the whole, his work is marked by a grace and dignity that reveal the miraculous in the everyday. Through Sept. 3. ♦ "Paughtraits," as he dubbed them, made John Singer Sargent famous, but he was testy about the genre. "I abhor and abjure them, and hope never to do another, especially of the Upper Classes," he wrote to a fellow painter. He would, one imagines, have been delighted by **"Beyond the Portrait Studio,"** an exhibition of his landscapes and works on paper, most of them donated to the museum half a century ago by the artist's sister. The hundred or so images on view show Sargent at his amazing best and embarrassing worst, from his dazzling watercolors of sunlit brooks to his sentimental homoerotic scenes of English soldiers sunbathing. Among the most astonishing images are the earliest: at fourteen, Sargent's technical facility was already eerie, with a mechanical precision that cools one's exhilaration. Through Sept. 24. ♦ **"Other Pictures: Vernacular Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection."** Through Aug. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)



Vocalist Daryl Sherman and pianist Dave McKenna, at the Algonquin.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Making Choices."** The twenty-four-part show concentrates on works made between 1920 and 1960, drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings, in a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist (Man Ray, Cartier-Bresson, Morandi). Closing, in stages, on Aug. 22, Sept. 19, and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"1900: Art at the Crossroads"** reopens a sort of art-world time capsule, contrasting representative works from the movements that took shape at the beginning of the past century. Through Sept. 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

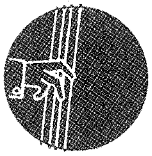
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—What's black and white and red all over? Barbara Kruger's confrontational retrospective, jam-packed with the artist's familiar tabloid-style images that superimpose political aphorisms—("Your body is a battleground," "It's a small world, but not if you have to clean it") on found black-and-white photographs. The imagery smacks of the "Father Knows Best" generation, and Kruger delivers a roundhouse punch to Dad (as well as the institutional Big Brother) in a series of floor-to-ceiling installations that hammer home inequities of gender, race, and class. Through Oct. 22. ♦ **"The Art of Alice Neel,"** the museum's second retrospective devoted to the artist, and the first since her death, in 1984, offers seventy-five paintings and watercolors, including likenesses of artists (Andy Warhol, Robert Smithson), writers (Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Fearing), and family members. Through Sept. 17. ♦ **"Carnival Strippers: Photographs by Susan Meiselas."** Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—For **"Pastoral Pop!,"** the Whitney curator Debra Singer has transformed the sculpture court into a terrarium of emerging art, which makes a nice complement to the landscape-photography show installed inside the museum. Lisa Ruyter's neo-Warhol paint-by-numbers canvas, a lazy scene of Central Park installed high on the atrium's wall like a billboard, sets the show's summer-in-the-city tone. Several of the artists tweak the tradition of the plant-filled corporate lobby. Alyson Shotz fashions a bamboo grove from painted steel rods and Q-Tips; with wheels in lieu of roots, it smacks of genetic engineering. Rob de Mar joins horticulture and "Horton Hears a Who" in his showstopping sculpture, a flocked fantasia in the shape of a tree whose branches lead to fantastical environments: clouds studded with palm trees, snow-tipped pines, asphalt parking lots, and cascading waterfalls. Through Dec. 15. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

ED FOTHERINGHAM

THE NEW MUSEUM
583 Broadway (219-1222)—While Martha Rosler's artistic step-cousins Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger have been polishing epigraphs, Rosler, who says she would prefer that audiences see her "as a ham-fisted person . . . trying something they could do better," has been making her own brand of smart, funny, homespun photo-collages, videos, and text pieces. Her first retrospective opens with the reprise of the 1973 work "Monumental Garage Sale," a combination bargain hunt and art event that uses the display and sale of clothing, household items, and "objects d'art" to lure viewers into video, audio, and slide meditations on family and commerce, then into a backroom sale of more risqué items, which have included pornography and used underwear. Additional works include photographs, panels of cards from several of her postcard novels, and "A Budding Gourmet," a video that looks at gender and artistic production via a mockery of TV cooking shows. Presented in conjunction with the International Center of Photography; through Oct. 8. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

JAZZ NOTES



EUROPA, EUROPA
Though European self-congratulation about jazz is sometimes hard to swallow—no, the French didn't invent it—it shouldn't prevent us from appreciating genuine Continental talents. The smartest European jazz musicians long ago realized that imitating classic players was a losing proposition, and the best new European jazz is refreshingly free of the genuflection toward Louis, Duke, and Miles which continues to make mainstream American jazz sound like so much boot-licking.

"In & Out" (Dreyfus), a collaboration between the Algerian-born, French-based pianist Martial Solal and the American expatriate saxophonist Johnny Griffin, has all the blues-inflected authenticity that you'd expect from the great Griffin, a hard-bop legend who worked with Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, and others. But Griffin also keeps his ears attuned to Solal, a brilliantly asymmetrical stylist with an unsentimental streak. The mix works wonderfully, with Solal's unexpected flourishes floating above Griffin's gritty foundation.

The Polish trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, who is as much a composer and arranger as a distinctive player, isn't afraid to turn his back on conventional notions of rhythmic swing. On his most recent release, **"From the Green Hill"** (ECM), he not only chooses a slower pace but upends traditional instrumentation. Stanko meshes his horn with the violin of avant-classical musician Michelle Makarski, the baritone saxophone and bass clarinet of British jazz giant John Surman, and the bandoneon of master Argentine player Dino Saluzzi. The results are highly affecting, with a cinematic sweep and diverse, folk-inflected influences.

More traditionally European in flavor is the violinist Didier Lockwood's **"A Tribute to Stéphane Grappelli"** (Dreyfus), which consciously evokes the spirits of the great violinist and his partner, the Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt. Lockwood summons up the lusty, bistro-inflected tone that was Grappelli's trademark, and the guitarist Bireli Lagrene, also a Gypsy, updates Reinhardt wonderfully. But the set's secret weapon is the nimble work of the bass virtuoso Nils Henning Orsted Pedersen; competitive American players will be glad that he makes his home in Denmark.

—Steve Futterman

And You Think
Your Mother
Is Hard To Please.

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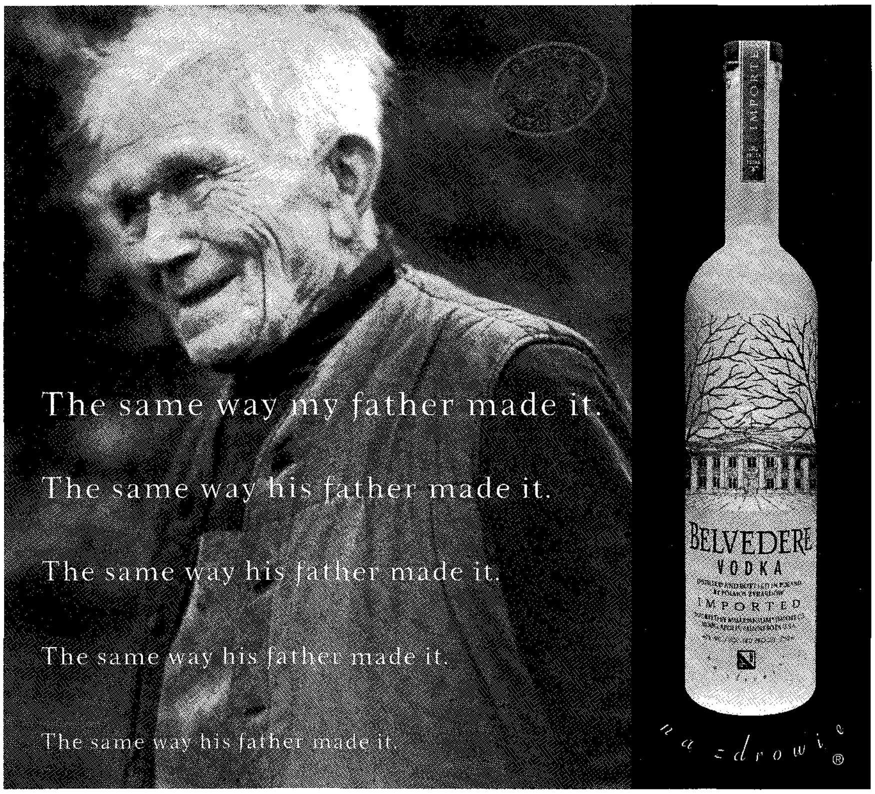
The same way my father made it.
The same way his father made it.
The same way his father made it.
The same way his father made it.
The same way his father made it.
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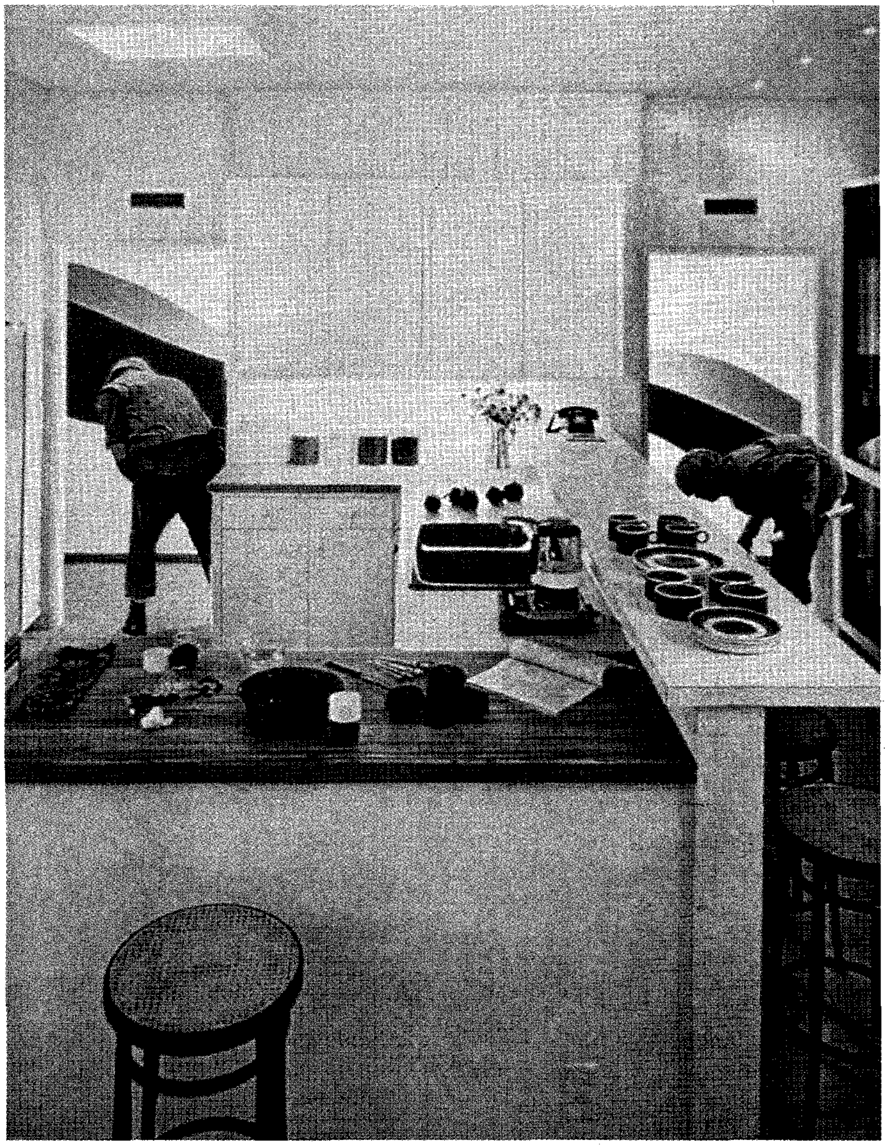


"Red Stripe Kitchen," from the series "Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful," by Martha Rosler, at the New Museum and the International Center of Photography.

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

"BALLS"
This clever show is based on the simplest of themes: every work of art is or refers to something round. The artists range from established (Jasper Johns, William Wegman) to emerging (the collaborative team Type A, whose sculpture of oversized athletic cups provides the inevitable double entendre). The show's tongue-in-cheek approach is summed up by Damien Hirst's "What Goes Up Must Come Down," in which a hair dryer keeps a Ping-Pong ball aloft. Perfect summer fare. Through Aug. 18. (James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171.)

"SIX WOMEN ARTISTS"
The standout in this collection of works on paper is a group of Dorothea Rockburne's monoprints from the mid-nineties. Their formal premise is simple: Rockburne soaks yards of filament in color and then lays them down onto an inked plate. The results are Spirographic delights, tangles of line that call to mind Alphonse Mucha as much as Jackson Pollock. In a second group, Rockburne brusquely paints over the looping patterns, as if to banish any suspicion of preciousness. Other highlights include rarely seen watercolors by Eva Hesse and a lovely abbreviated charcoal drawing of Berkeley Square, in London, by Susan Crowder. Through Sept. 15. (Ganz, 25 E. 73rd St. 752-1223.)

Short List

PETER DAYTON
Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St.
327-2526. Through Aug. 16.

SHIRLEY GOLDFARB
Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.
Through Sept. 23.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

"THE CITY"
This twenty-artist gathering includes some celebrated names (Dan Graham, Vito Acconci, Peter Greenaway), but the most appealing works are by lesser-known artists working with street-level materials. Darren Kraft's ingenious "New York State of Mind" is a panoptic piece made entirely from postcards. Splicing together dozens of aerial views of Manhattan, Kraft turns the borough into an unfamiliar but nearly believable archipelago. Miranda Maher photographs gum-littered pavements as connect-the-dot constellations. Who knew that a terrestrial version of Cassiopeia, with its familiar zigzagging shape, was hiding in plain view at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-second Street? Jane Wilbraham, meanwhile, collects discarded cardboard packaging on the streets of her native London, which she assembles into typographical wall sculptures. Through Aug. 18. (Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 243-3335.)

"ELBOW ROOM"
Curated by Grady Turner of the New-York Historical Society, this show has a promising theme: Manhattan's public spaces as seen in recent art. Alas, the artists mostly use public spaces for unimaginatively lewd purposes, ranging from streak-ins to furtive exhibitionism. The exception is Nils Norman, less an artist than an idiosyncratic activist, who offers proposals for connecting Manhattan's pocket parks by a series of aerial walkways. Through Aug. 4. (Foster, 529 W. 20th St. 229-0044.)

"INAUGURAL SHOW"
Apart from Eric Ringsby's digital-video stills of rodeo pros on bucking broncos, you might never know that this new gallery is devoted largely to artists from Wyoming and Colorado. The gallery's founder, a recent arrival from Boulder, has assembled an eclectic group, none of whom seem remotely interested in campfires, corrals, or Yellowstone. Though photography dominates, the most striking work is a strange, solemn, neo-Baroque painting by Patty Wickman. Combining bags of saline solution, pixellized nudity, and Zurburan's image of St. Agatha (she of the lopped body parts), Wickman's boob-job dirge is about as far from Frederic Remington as you can get. Through Aug. 12. (Cornell DeWitt, 547 W. 27th St. 695-6845.)

"STOP: 100 YEARS OF AMERICAN SIGNAGE"
Most of the examples of roadside advertising date back to the medium's prewar golden age, when anonymous craftspeople painted and lettered oversized icons with a level of scrupulous naturalism normally reserved for duck decoys. Standouts include a ham sandwich of Brobdingnagian proportions, painted on a sheet of convex tin, and a set of knee-high Coca-Cola bottles in cast iron. When they are not presaging Pop art, some of these pieces suggest mysteries. Was Duocide a pest spray or a hair relaxer? And in what sense is it true that "Ice Never Fails"? Through Aug. 18. (Ricco Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

"THE TOY SHOW"
Using stuffed animals, Rubik's Cubes, and other commercially manufactured kiddie products as raw materials, these sixteen artists produce familiar sardonic effects. "You will be successful," a child's mirror sings. A matrix of Legos forms the image of a porn star. Barbie is subjected to various unpleasantnesses. While it's a pleasure to come across a show that sticks to its chosen theme, the genre itself may be due for a time-out. Through Aug. 26. (Nikolai Fine Art, 505 W. 22nd St. 414-8511.)

Short List

GERMAINE BROOKS / LORI TASCHLER
Grimm, 505 W. 28th St. 564-7662.
Both shows through Aug. 18.

HYUN-MI YOO
Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297.
Through Aug. 4.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

VANESSA BEECROFT
Last spring, Beecroft marshalled a group of Navy Seals to march onto the deck of the U.S.S. Intrepid and stand spotlit at attention for ninety minutes while she documented the proceedings. Her current show displays photographs and videos of the performance she called "The Silent Service." Deitch Projects's newly renovated, high-ceilinged second space on Wooster, entirely open to the street and light on one end, makes a perfect showcase for Beecroft's large-format, high-gloss portraits of the men; they hang high enough on the walls that you have to look up at them and strain for eye contact.

The videos are shown in a small, unmarked room by the front door and in the basement, and they're livelier than the photos suggest—balance falters, eyes wander, Adam's apples bob. Through Sept. 16. (Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 343-7300.)

ANH DUONG
Duong has been painting her own otherworldly self-portrait over and over for twelve years, with slightly larger-than-scale features on translucent skin, high cheekbones, wide ears, hooded eyes, and prominent pupils. She looks something like a malevolent fairy or a delicate troll, and even seems to appear a few times in the guise of a primitive male statue. After a walk around the room and a perusal of the list of long and sometimes floridly obscure French and English titles, viewers may wonder if the creatures Duong finds in the mirror are really worth the hours and hours she must spend looking into it. Through Sept. 16. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.)

GERALD KAMITAKI
The California native Kamitaki converts the May issue of *Artforum* into a suite of abstract works on paper. Using a razor blade, the artist incises concentric circles into a page and rotates it, kaleidoscopically altering the original. The results are intermittently engaging, particularly the scrambled pictures that illustrate a piece on Internet art. But on the whole this is spin art for the conceptual set. Through Aug. 26. (Staff USA, 495 Broadway. 925-9700.)

"THE BOAT SHOW"
Although the floating teepees that Gregory Lee Pickford anchored in New York Harbor in July didn't look terribly seaworthy, he has been thinking hard about boat construction. The three pieces installed here each take different tacks on the subject. Pickford places the skeleton of a beached canoe beside an ominous Thanksgiving table painted funerary black. This table, in turn, boasts a prow tenanted by a black crêpe-paper turkey. Between these Pilgrim and Indian icons, a small inflated raft, filled with water, shows videos of what appear to be interviews with young men who need saving from the streets. To brighten things up a little, Pickford and his co-curator have decked the walls with a few of Vincent Skeltis's photographs, large-format glossy shots of well-oiled women modelling thongs on shiny yachts. Through Aug. 27. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave. 647-0202.)

"FLAMING JUNE"
It may sound like an offshoot of Wigstock, but this annual showcase of young artists is actually named for a painting by Frederick Lord Leighton. Yvette Brackman's pictures of a naked couple lounging on red vinyl cushions plopped inexplicably on the forest floor are the most flaming, but best of show goes to photographer Roe Etheridge, whose pinhole photographs of flowers shot against floral backgrounds have the lurid intensity of a bad dream. Through Aug. 23. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. 925-4338.)

Short List

LINDA DANIELS / TAMARA GONZALES
Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424. Both shows through Sept. 9.

AUCTIONS

SWANN
The auction scene stirs from its estivation long enough for a sale of vintage posters, particularly rich in travel-related graphics. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Aug. 2.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

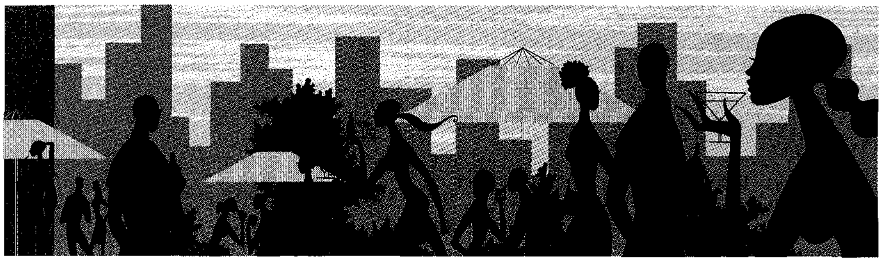
JAKOB TUGGENER
The Swiss photographer and filmmaker Jakob Tuggener (1904-1988) was one of the great but little-known precursors of Robert Frank's poetic realism: the two share a grainy technique and a casual observational style that proved tremendously influential. Steichen included a pair of Tuggener's photographs in his pivotal 1955 "Family of Man" exhibition at MOMA. Forty-five years later, Tuggener gets his first American solo show, which includes tight shots of workmen engrossed in their labor hanging alongside images of the messy glamour of grand hotel ballrooms and the simple curl of a pig's tail on a plate. Through Sept. 2. (Scalo, 560 Broadway. 334-9393.)

"ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTS IN CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY"
How do you fit fifteen artists into a room whose dimensions measure less than thirty by thirty feet square? Limit them to one work each. The pictures on show here deal not so much with finished architectural products as with virtual and modelled spaces. Those few that include real structures are shot from oblique angles, or altered by collage or drawing. Nic Nicosia's "Domestic Drama," a staged scene of a couple fighting bitterly over the blueprints of a new house, surrounded by workmen handling various stages of construction, reminds viewers that these abstract architectural diagrams have concrete consequences. Through Aug. 18. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"FAMILY TREE"
This group of family-focussed photos includes work by five artists, some pieces clearly stronger than others. Lois Guarino's montages and Laurent Millet's collages look cluttered compared to the simpler pictures on display. Pages from Karl Baden's photo-and-text journal of his wife's pregnancy and their baby's early days offer interesting reading matter, but they seem inconsequential alongside his ongoing self-portrait project—a harshly flash-lit, passport-style photo every morning for the last thirteen years, three years of which are on show. Leo Rubinfien's large, close-up, black-and-white portraits of his infant daughter—who has the face of an ancient Catskills comedian—hang near the windows, as do Maria Meisenberger's early- and mid-nineties nude self-portraits and "somagrams." The latter are monoprints made with a home-brewed solution smeared onto Meisenberger's skin and transferred to paper through direct contact; they are framed under glass silk-screened with the Morse-code-like patterns of her DNA. Through Aug. 25. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 989-7600.)

"PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SUMMER READING"
The incorporation of text into fine-art photographs is often more theoretically than visually appealing, but this collection of wordy pictures includes some memorable work. Several classic studies of signs and graffiti from the forties and fifties hang near two early-eighties Jim Goldberg double portraits, on which his subjects have written their impressions of the scene: "Me and Bobby been together for two weeks and we're still happy." Other pictures focus on readers rather than words, such as William Wegman's "How They Are Towards Newspapers," which features an early dog, and JoAnn Verburg's beautiful three-panel color work, "Still Life with Jim," which takes in a carefully arranged nude with book and crossword. Through Aug. 30. (Pace/McGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

EXCURSIONS



ANJA KROENCKE

OUTDOOR DRINKING
When the weather outside is perfect—clear skies, gentle breezes—drinking inside can seem almost uncivilized. Even when summer delivers less welcome conditions, you don't need a roof over your head to have a bottle in your hand; a beer or a cocktail sipped in the open air can take the edge off the muggiest afternoon.

There's an old saying about the high prices at New York City bars—"You're not paying for the drink, you're paying for the real estate." The Peninsula Hotel's **Penn Top Bar**, where the double-digit Cosmopolitans are subsidizing a patch of Astro-Turf twenty-three stories above the sidewalk, is a perfect example. Early on a clear summer evening, a long shadow eclipses the terrace, a breeze comes up, and the moon rises over the Chippendale-style top of the Sony building. (Peninsula Hotel, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. 956-2888.)

The two sibling restaurants in midtown's busiest park, the **Bryant Park Café** and the **Bryant Park Grill**, are a study in split-personality alfresco drinking. At the Café, gangs of single young professionals cluster on Thursday nights before heading to the Hamptons for the weekend. The atmosphere feels like a backyard barbecue; men in polo shirts lean against the tree trunks while the scent of hamburgers hangs in the air. Over at the Grill, the setting is more elevated—the outdoor bar is on the roof of the restaurant—and so is the crowd, a slightly more mature bunch that likes to meet underneath the clear plastic tent and look out over the park. (25 W. 40th St. 840-6500.)

On Fridays and Saturdays, the **Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden** at the Metropolitan Museum is a popular early-evening nightspot, with a crowd that mixes little black dresses (the locals) and green canvas backpacks (the tourists). Everyone stands along the small hedges at the garden's perimeter, taking in the green canopy of Central Park's treetops. The wait staff is as rigid as the angular David Smith pieces on display—house rules allow them to serve drinks only until 8, although the space remains open until 8:45. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 879-5500.)

Up until the early twentieth century, beer gardens were a fixture of several New York neighborhoods, places where immigrant families would gather to eat, drink, sing, and dance. Most of these outdoor enclaves have gone the way of the zeppelin, but a few still remain in the outer boroughs, including the **Bohemian Hall & Park** in Queens. Beneath the leafy expanse of two dozen eighty-year-old maple and sycamore trees, a sea of red picnic tables surrounds a small wooden stage. Pilsner, of course, is on tap, along with an assortment of Czech beers. (29-19 Twenty-fourth Ave., Astoria. 718-728-9776.)

After spending the afternoon at the Bohemian Hall, you may want to check out Queens' other establishments, such as **On the Waterfront Marina Bar & Grill**, sandwiched between the Sand Bar Restaurant and the Broad Channel Bait and Tackle shack. The place has closer ties to the Jersey Shore than to New York City: Jimmy Buffet is on the jukebox, the furniture consists of round tables with plastic chairs, and the mixed drinks come in plastic cups. There are a few luxuries, however: the draft beer is served in glass pints, and the view of Jamaica Bay is pristine. Best of all, there's a floating dock with a Jet-Ski rental concession; all you really need is a driver's license, a credit card, and your sobriety. (22-25 Van Brunt Rd., Broad Channel, Queens. 718-474-7768.)

—*John J. Donohue*

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—**"A Durable Memento"** presents daguerreotypes of places (Connecticut, Liberia) and people (John Brown) taken by Augustus Washington, the son of a former slave. Through Sept. 24. **"Positions in the Life World"** surveys Martha Rossler's photos and videos, including such classics as her 1975 "Semiotics of the Kitchen." Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

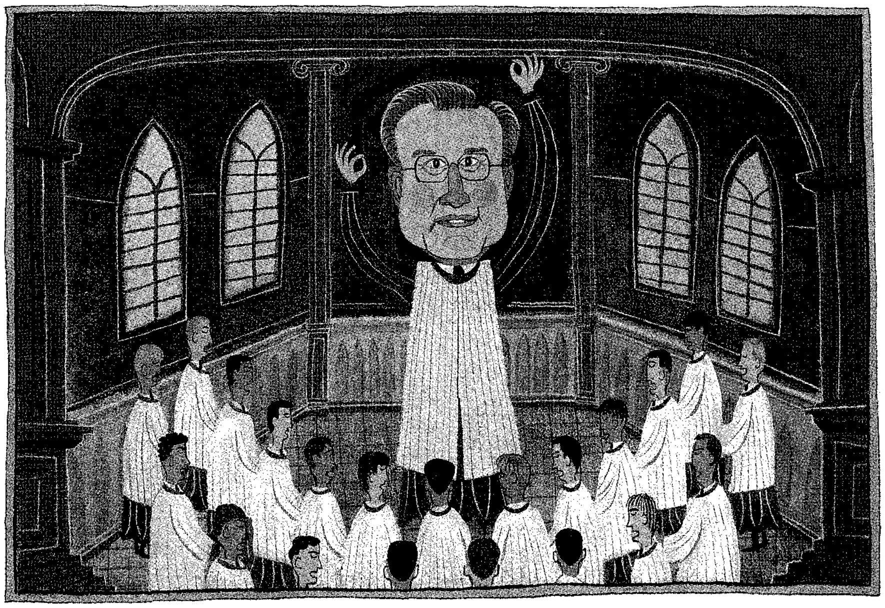
ELLIOTT ERWITT
Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Aug. 11.

W. EUGENE SMITH
Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Aug. 12.

"AIR CONDITIONED: INTERIORS"
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Aug. 31.

"SPIAGGE: THE BEACH"
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Sept. 9.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum.



Stephen Cleobury directs the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, at Mostly Mozart.

PETER SELGIN

CLASSICAL MUSIC
ORCHESTRAS

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
In the final week of the orchestra's free parks concerts, Mikko Franck, a twenty-year-old Finn who is already well launched in his international conducting career, leads Bernstein's "Candide" Overture, Gershwin's "An American in Paris," Alexander Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto (featuring the orchestra's principal trumpeter, Philip Smith), and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (in the rarely played 1945 version). (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Aug. 2. ♦ Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. Aug. 3. ♦ Westchester Community College, Valhalla, N.Y. Aug. 5. Evenings at 8. No tickets necessary for any of these concerts. Fireworks follow every performance. For rain-date information, call 875-5709.)

MOSTLY MOZART
Aug. 2 at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (the "Prague") and his F-Major Piano Concerto (K. 459, with Peter Serkin), in addition to excerpts from Beethoven's "Fidelio": the "Leonore" Overture No. 3 (written for an early version of the opera) and the "Fidelio" Overture, as well as several arias and duets featuring soprano Carol Vaness and tenor Vinson Cole. (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** At 7, pianist Alicia de Larrocha and soprano Olga Serra offer works by Mozart and by Spanish composers in a pre-concert recital open to ticket holders.) ♦ Aug. 3 at 8: The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, a period-instrument group led by violinist Catherine Mackintosh, performs Baroque music from England, including several Handel arias featuring countertenor David Daniels. (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 4-5 at 8: Mr. Schwarz and the orchestra perform Webern's orchestral version of the ricercar from Bach's "A Musical Offering," Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (a rewriting of Handel's Concerto Grosso in B-Flat Major, Op. 6, No. 7, which will also be played in its original form), and Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271, with Ms. de Larrocha). The Tokyo String Quartet takes the solo role in the Schoenberg. (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In pre-concert recitals, open to ticket holders both nights at 7, the Tokyo String Quartet plays Shostakovich's Quartet No. 1.) ♦ Aug. 6 at 5: Violinist Itzhak Perlman oversees a program of music for string orchestra, played by students from the Perlman Music Program. (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 7 at 8: Stephen Cleobury directs the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, in motets by Bach and Brahms, in addition to Mozart's Missa Brevis in F Major (K. 192/186f). (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 8-9 at 8: Harry Bicket has been quietly making his mark in town, thanks to his fine conducting in the past couple of seasons at New York City Opera, leading three operas by Mozart. In his Mostly Mozart début, he'll conduct that composer's Symphony No. 39, in addition to a very late Baroque suite from Rameau's "Les Boréades" (written in 1764, in the last months of the composer's life), Haydn's C-Major Cello Concerto (from precisely the same period, here featuring Truls Mørk), and Mendelssohn's Double Concerto in D Minor (with the brother-and-sister team of violinist Gil Shaham and pianist Orli Shaham). (Avery Fisher Hall. **Note:** In a pre-concert recital on Aug. 8, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, the Shahams offer Franck's A-Major Violin Sonata.) (For information about all Mostly Mozart tickets, call 721-6500.)

NEW YORK POPS
Skitch Henderson and Charles Prince lead free outdoor performances of light classics, with vibraphonist Peter Appleyard taking a solo turn. (Prospect Park Band Shell, Brooklyn. Aug. 5 at 7:30. ♦ Snug Harbor Cultural Center Band Shell, Staten Island. Aug. 6 at 5.)

RECITALS

"MAKE MINE MOZART"
Between Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart festival and Trinity Church's current series, Wolfgang has the city covered uptown and down just now. Trinity's free lunchtime offerings continue this week as oboist Sarah Davol and four string-playing colleagues offer three of the composer's string quartets plus his Oboe Quartet. (Broadway at Wall St. Aug. 3 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

BARGEMUSIC
Aug. 3 at 7:30 and Aug. 6 at 4: Violinist Christian Bor, violist Marcus Thompson, cellist Ronald Thomas, and pianist Edward Auer team up for a concert comprising Beethoven's C-Major Cello Sonata (Op. 102, No. 1), Dohnányi's Serenade for String Trio, and Schumann's Piano Quartet. ♦ Aug. 4-5 at 7:30: Randall Hodgkinson performs Schubert's Four Impromptus (D. 935), as well as piano sonatas by Prokofiev (his Eighth) and Brahms (in F Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

MAKIKO HIRATA
The pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata in F Major (Op. 10, No. 2), in addition to pieces by Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Aug. 6 at noon.)

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE
The ensemble's brass quintet presents scaled-down arrangements of popular marches. (Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park. Aug. 6 at 2. In case of rain, this performance will take place at the Church of the Mediator, Kingsbridge Ave. at 231st St. ♦ McGinley Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus. Aug. 6 at 4.)

OUT OF TOWN

A selective listing of festival events within a reasonable drive from New York City.

BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
Opening concerts of the festival, which continues through Aug. 20 and features familiar faces from the New York chamber-music scene. Aug. 2 at 8: An all-Beethoven concert includes the "Archduke" Piano Trio. ♦ Aug. 6 at 6:30: Copland's "Appalachian Spring" Suite and Mendelssohn's Octet. (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton, Long Island. For information about tickets, call 631-537-6368.)

SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
Charles Dutoit and the Philadelphia Orchestra settle in for their summer season. Aug. 2 at 8:15: Symphonic works by Beethoven, including his Piano Concerto No. 4 (with André Watts) and his Symphony No. 5. ♦ Aug. 3 at 7: Corky Siegel is featured, playing harmonica and piano, in an orchestral concert that includes Gershwin's "An American in Paris" and William Russo's "Street Music (Blues Concerto for Harmonica, Piano, and Orchestra)." ♦ Aug. 4 at 8:15: Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" Overture, Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto (featuring Jeffrey Khaner), and Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Emanuel Ax). ♦ Aug. 5 at 8:15: Mozart's "Don Giovanni" Overture, the première of Richard Danielpour's Violin Concerto (subtitled "A Fool's Paradise," and here featuring Chantal Juillet), and Orff's "Carmina Burana." Soprano Nancy Allen Lundy, tenor Stanford Olsen, and bass-baritone Stephen Powell are the soloists in the last. ♦ Aug. 7 at 8:15: Chamber works by Bach, Beethoven, and Boulez precede a performance of Berio's often surprising "Folk Songs" (with mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato as soloist and with Charles Dutoit conducting a large chamber group). ♦ Aug. 8 at 8:15: Chamber music by Martinů, Lowell Liebermann, Ervín Schulhoff, and Dvořák, performed by violinist Sarah Chang, flutist Jeffrey Khaner, and numerous colleagues. (Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 518-587-3330.)

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TANGLEWOOD
Aug. 2 at 8:30: Instrumental works by Purcell, Bach, Handel, and William Boyce, played on period instruments by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. ♦ Aug. 3 at 8:30: Daniel Barenboim is so active as a conductor that audiences seem to forget that he remains a practicing pianist. Where he finds the time to keep his technique in such stellar shape is a conundrum, but he'll put it to use in this program of highly virtuosic works by Liszt (all three of his "Sonetti del Patrarca," plus "Après une Lecture du Dante—Fantasia Quasi Sonata") and Albéniz (the first two books of "Iberia"). ♦ Aug. 4 at 8:30: Unlike Mr. Barenboim, Van Cliburn has all the time in the world to practice at his palatial digs in Fort Worth, Texas, but, on the rare occasions when he plays in public, he usually ends up sounding seat-of-his-pants and slapdash. In this concert, he offers another run-through of Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 (his signature piece, and one of the very few concertos he plays anymore). Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra lend their support, and tackle the same composer's Symphony No. 6 (the "Pathétique") on their own. ♦ Aug. 5 at 8:30: John Williams leads the Boston Pops in some of his own film music, as well as in Copland's score for "The Red Pony." ♦ Aug. 6 at 2:30: Britten's "War Requiem" can almost always be relied upon to pack a pacifist punch, and it's so complex to produce that only the most skilled performing groups tend to go near it. Mr. Ozawa conducts it here, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the PALS Children's Chorus, and soloists Christine Goerke (soprano), Anthony Dean Griffey (tenor), and Thomas Quasthoff (bass-baritone). ♦ Aug. 8 at 8:30: Mr. Quasthoff is joined by pianist Justus Zeyen for Schumann's "Dichterliebe" and songs by Mozart and Mahler. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

CARAMOOR
Aug. 3 at 4:30: Sonatas by Janáček, Brahms, and Beethoven, performed by the French violinist Sara Bitlloch and the pianist Benjamin Hochman. ♦ Aug. 4 at 8: Guitarist Manuel Barrueco, flutist Ransom Wilson, and several colleagues offer twentieth-century works by five American composers whose styles range from exoticism to jazz and pop: Lou Harrison, Robert Beaser, Michael Daugherty, Chick Corea, and Aaron Jay Kernis. ♦ Aug. 5: A daylong jazz festival, featuring an afternoon of four groups in succession (beginning at 2) and an evening concert (at 8) by the James Moody quartet, with several friends. ♦ Aug. 6 at 4:30: The Chicago-based Vermeer String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in C Major, Op. 74, No. 1) and Smetana (his First), and is joined by Vladimir Feltsman for Brahms's Piano Quintet. (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
All four of this summer's productions are currently running in repertory. Aug. 3 at 8 and Aug. 5 at 1:30: "The Glass Blowers," a 1913 spoof of American jingoism by John Philip Sousa. ♦ Aug. 4 at 8 and Aug. 8 at 2: "Salome." ♦ Aug. 5 at 8 and Aug. 7 at 2: "La Bohème." ♦ Aug. 6 at 2: Handel's delightful pastoral "Acis and Galatea," with a cast consisting of soprano Christine Brandes, tenors John McVeigh and John Tessier, and baritone Dean Elzinga. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

DENNIS KEENE CHORAL FESTIVAL
For the third consecutive year, professional (or would-be professional) choristers and choral conductors from around the country gather in the idyllic northwest corner of Connecticut to hone their skills under a faculty headed by Mr. Keene, best known in New York as the director of the Ascension Music Chorus and Orchestra. Three public concerts this week allow the participants to put their skills on display in a wide-ranging repertoire. Aug. 3 at 8: Works by Poulenc, Britten, Brahms, and others, performed by the Kent Singers (directed by Marguerite Mullée) and the KeeneFest Festival Singers (led by several of the convocation's conducting fellows). ♦ Aug. 5 at 6:30: Music for chamber chorus, by Schütz, Bach, Haydn, and others, with Susanne Peck and Peter Bagley among the conductors. (**Note:** The early curtain allows for an extended intermission that will accommodate a full picnic break.) ♦ Aug. 6 at 3: Mr. Keene and several of his colleagues oversee the closing concert, which is given over entirely to music by Mozart, principally his Requiem. (St. Joseph's Chapel, Kent School, Kent, Conn. For information about tickets, call 860-927-5563.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
A weekend with the Ludwig String Quartet, a fifteen-year-old French ensemble that, in 1991, became the first string quartet ever appointed to a teaching residency at the hoary Paris Conservatoire (from which all of its members graduated). Aug. 5 at 8: The foursome plays quartets by Debussy and Beethoven (in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2), as well as Granados's G-Major Piano Quintet (with the assistance of Stella Simakova). ♦ Aug. 6 at 3: This concert was to have featured New England's legendary classical-radio broadcaster Robert J. Lurtsema as the narrator in the première of a work dedicated to him, Seymour Barab's "Winnie-the-Pooh and Some Bees," for speaker and string quartet. Mr. Lurtsema was renowned not only for his eclectic programming but also for allowing great expanses of airtime to pass in silence. To the grief of his countless fans, he died on June 12. As a result, this concert has become something of a memorial, and the saxophonist and new-age-music guru Paul Winter will assume the role originally intended for Mr. Lurtsema. Also on the program are quartets by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2) and Schubert (in E-Flat Major, D. 87), as well as Dutilleux's "Ainsi la Nuit." (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
Aug. 5 at 8: Pianist Ian Hobson performs Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Sonata (in its original 1913 version), in addition to Schumann's "Three Romances" (Op. 28), Schubert's Sonata in C Minor (D. 958), and Benjamin Lees's "Mirrors." ♦ Aug. 6 at 3: The Bachmann-Klibanoff-Fridman Trio offers two mainstays of the repertoire—Haydn's Trio in C Major (Hob. XV: 27) and Mendelssohn's in D Minor—in addition to a relative curiosity (Turina's Piano Trio No. 2) and a product of the nineteen-nineties that is well on its way to becoming a modern classic: Paul Schoenfield's infectious "Café Music." (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

MODEL CITIZENS
Despite the publicity and pomp that surrounded OpSail 2000, many New Yorkers may have missed out on the parade of tall ships. This weekend, sails and masts return to South Street Seaport, albeit in miniature form, for the tenth annual Ship and Boat Model Festival. More than fifty exhibitors will display models of vessels such as H.M.S. Victory, which was Lord Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar, and the U.S.S. Constitution, which was the last original warship of the Continental Navy. The singing trio Spindrift will provide the ambience in the form of sea chanteys. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. For more information, call 748-8758. Aug. 5-6, from 12 to 5.)

READINGS
Aug. 2 at 7:30: By Myla Goldberg, from her novel, "Bee Season." (Barnes & Noble, 625 Sixth Ave. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 5 at 2:30: By the jazz singer Gloria Lynne, from her memoir, "I Wish You Love." (The New York Public Library, Countee Cullen Branch, 104 W. 136th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Aug. 6 at 7: By Daniel Wallace, from his novel "Ray in Reverse," and Daniel Handler, from his novel "Shut Your Mouth." (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

WALKS
Aug. 5 at 11: Learn about the history and design of Central Park's Conservatory Garden. (For more information, call 360-2727.) ♦ Aug. 6 at 2: Examine the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the world's largest Gothic cathedral, and tour the cathedral house funded by J. P. Morgan. (For more information, call 996-1100.) ♦ Aug. 6 at 2:30: Visit many "points of freedom and destiny" in Greenwich Village and NoHo, on a tour focussing on the history and architecture of radical New York. (For more information, call 718-264-3021.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Dear Diary

"To be a diarist," Harold Nicholson wrote in his diary, "one must have a little snouty, sneaky mind." He was talking about Samuel Pepys, whose record of seventeenth-century England has just appeared in its first complete American paperback edition (California). But Pepys wasn't the only snouty, sneaky mind to keep track of his daily existence.

A near-contemporary in France, the Duc de St. Simon, began his **MEMOIRS** (Trafalgar Square) in 1691, recording the ins and outs of life at the court of Louis XIV. Excessively conscious of his own dignity, this proud noble scorned the decadent royal family with passages of withering eloquence: "Nature fashioned him like a ball to be rolled hither and thither at the will of others," the Duc wrote when the Dauphin died. "He would, albeit with no desire to do ill, have made a most abominable king."

Three centuries later, **THE DIARIES OF COUNT HARRY KESSLER** (Grove) recorded a similar verdict on Hitler ("indecisive, dithering, and easily influenced") as the growth of Nazism began to encroach on the extraordinary cultural circle surrounding this diplomat and publisher. The Count argues politics with Richard Strauss's wife, watches Josephine Baker dance, and overhears Einstein confess that "he cannot make out why people are so interested in his theories."

Describing an earlier golden age, Lorenzo Da Ponte's **MEMOIRS** (NYRB) recount how he sat in Vienna writing a libretto for Mozart: "As fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music. In six weeks everything was in order." Da Ponte's narrative, which finds him dodging debt all over Europe before resettling in New York, is filled with tall tales. After one such story, the author reveals his grander designs: "I have thought many times," he writes, "of turning this episode into a musical comedy."

—*Leo Carey*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Books.

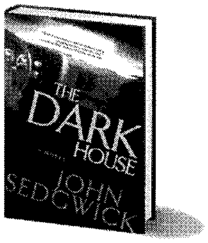
[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

A Midsummer Night's Read

THE DARK HOUSE

by John Sedgwick

Lonely and dissatisfied with his seemingly perfect life, the handsome, well-bred Edward Rollins finds solace in following strangers driving in their cars and fantasizing about their lives. But one fateful night, his voyeuristic tendencies lead him to a decades-old murder, an unknown woman and chilling secrets about his family's past. (HarperCollins)



Pub. Price: $25.00

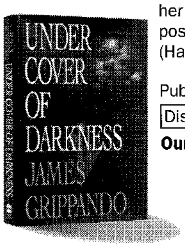
Discount **20%**

Our Price: $20.00

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

by James Grippando

When the wife of prominent Seattle attorney Gus Wheatley vanishes, it is feared that she is the latest victim of a brutal serial killer. As both the prominent lawyer and the FBI search for clues, they uncover her secret links to a bizarre cult leader and her possible involvement in the murders themselves. (HarperCollins)



Pub. Price: $25.00

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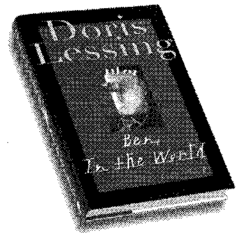
BEN, IN THE WORLD

by Doris Lessing

In a sequel to *The Fifth Child*, the bestselling author reintroduces a hideous but abnormally strong young man named Ben Lovatt. The powerful tale of a modern-day Frankenstein, *Ben, in the World* navigates the reader through the tumultuous sea of Ben's life that is by turns heartbreaking, joyous, entertaining, horrifying, and, ultimately, tragic. (HarperCollins)



Pub. Price: $23.00

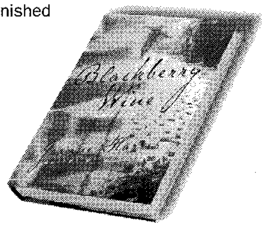
Discount **20%**

Our Price: $18.40

BLACKBERRY WINE

by Joanne Harris

In an enchanting novel from the author of *Chocolat*, Jay Mackintosh fondly remembers his boyhood connection with a magical storyteller named Jackapple Joe. Twenty years later, in an attempt to revive his stalled writing career, Jay moves to a tiny French village to recapture the innocence that vanished along with Jackapple Joe. (Morrow)



Pub. Price: $24.00

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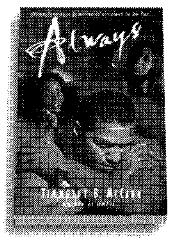
ALWAYS

by Timmothy B. McCann

The day Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot, teenager Henry Louis Davis II promised his girlfriend that he would become the country's first African-American president. Years later, on the eve of a presidential election with Henry as a candidate, the long separated soulmates recall their dreams and the love that still unites them. (Quill)



Pub. Price: $13.00

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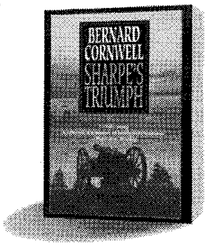
SHARPE'S TRIUMPH

by Bernard Cornwell

In this installment of the internationally bestselling series, Sergeant Richard Sharpe does service with the British Army in colonial India. During an historically accurate retelling of the 1803 battle of Assay, Sharpe is confronted by the treasonous Lt. Dodd, a defector to the mercenary Mahratta confederation. (Perennial)



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MOVIES OPENING

BETTER LIVING
A comedy about a long-absent father (Roy Scheider) who returns to his wife (Olympia Dukakis) and three daughters. Written and directed by Max Mayer. Opening Aug. 4.

COYOTE UGLY
Feisty female bartenders at a Manhattan night club strive to become famous. With Piper Perabo, John Goodman, and Tyra Banks. Directed by David McNally. Opening Aug. 4.

HOLLOW MAN
Kevin Bacon plays a scientist who takes an invisibility serum and then proceeds to menace his colleagues, in this thriller directed by Paul Verhoeven. With Elisabeth Shue and Josh Brolin. Opening Aug. 4.

PSYCHO BEACH PARTY
A spoof of surfer movies and slasher flicks which begins with a murder at a drive-in theatre. Directed by Robert Lee King and written by Charles Busch. Opening Aug. 4.

SAVING GRACE
An upper-class English lady (Brenda Blethyn) plants a huge crop of marijuana in order to save her manor house, in this comedy directed by Nigel Cole. Opening Aug. 4.

SPACE COWBOYS
Clint Eastwood directed this action picture in which he plays a veteran astronaut who returns to space on a critical repair mission. With Tommy Lee Jones and James Garner. Opening Aug. 4.

THE TAO OF STEVE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 4.

THE TIC CODE
A drama set in the Manhattan jazz world, about a gifted young saxophonist with Tourette's syndrome. With Gregory Hines and Polly Draper. Opening Aug. 4.

FILM NOTES

If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.

BENJAMIN SMOKE
This documentary, a requiem for the singer-songwriter Benjamin (a.k.a. Robert Dickerson) of the band Smoke, has the funereal gloom of a great Lou Reed record. The filmmakers, Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen, weave Benjamin's story—his impoverished life in Cabbagetown (a former mill town that's now part of Atlanta), his Southern drag-queen demeanor, his pill-popping, his struggle with AIDS—into a ragged tapestry of a talented life in extreme situations. Benjamin's face is a junkie rock star's dream (it has shades of Mick Jagger, David Johansen, and Steven Tyler), and his vocal delivery echoes Tom Waits and John Cale. What the directors get exactly right are the details of Benjamin's world: the damaged photographs, the graying shingled houses, and the cut and bruised townspeople. It's no surprise when Patti Smith shows up at the end of the film with a poem she's written for him.—*Bruce Diones* (The Screening Room.)

BUT I'M A CHEERLEADER
Natasha Lyonne—who stars in this O.K. comedy about a group of unfortunate gay teens at a "deprogramming" camp determined to "heterosexualize" them—certainly doesn't have the right people working for her. If she did, her agent and manager would realize what Lyonne should be doing: developing a bio-pic about the late, great comedienne Judy Holliday. Lyonne has the same impeccable timing, the same intelligence, and the same "How did I get here?" expression, which immediately overwhelms every movie she's in, including this one.—*Hilton Als* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Empire 25.)

BUTTERFLY
In a small Spanish town, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1936, an asthmatic little boy falls under the spell of a marvellous old teacher with republican sympathies. Director José Luis Cuerda's charmer, set in the Galicia region, doesn't press its themes. The boy learns to love nature; his older brother undergoes a sexual awakening; the fierce discordancies of the war years gather slowly under the idyllic surface of the film. The exquisite, hard-focus cinematography (your eyesight seems to improve as you watch the movie) is by Javier G. Salmones. With the imposing, gravel-voiced Fernando Fernán Gómez as the teacher and Manuel Lozano as the boy.—*David Denby* (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

CHICKEN RUN
A full-length exercise in stop-motion animation, but don't be scared. Nick Park improved the world with the introduction of the master-and-dog comedy duo Wallace and Gromit; now, in fellowship with Peter Lord, he has turned to chickens. Our heroines are hens, living claw-to-beak on a repressive farm, whose owner plans to switch from egg production to chicken potpies. Enter a roaming rooster named Rocky, pumped with American cheer and graced with the voice of Mel Gibson. He will lead the ladies over the wire to pastures new. The result is bright and inventive, though it lacks the snap of earlier Park productions.—*Anthony Lane* (7/10/00) (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square and Union Square.)

CHUCK & BUCK
Chuck and Buck were lovers when they were eleven, and some sixteen years later Chuck (Chris Weitz) has become a sleek, soon-to-be-married, Los Angeles record producer, while Buck (Mike White) has spent the intervening years obsessed with his boyhood friend. He shows up in Los Angeles and pursues Chuck, spying on him at work and at home. Buck is supposed to be a voyeuristic creep, but a saintly creep—a true innocent in love. Shot in digital video, the picture lacks the scale and detail of a real movie. It feels clammy and claustrophobic, and it's filled with closeups of the two actors, both of whom are open-mouthed and dim.—*D.D.* (7/24/00) (Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.)

THE DECALOGUE
In 1988 and 1989, the Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski made a series of ten films for Polish television, in which each movie, roughly an hour in length, was devoted to one of the Ten Commandments. The films, set largely around an apartment complex in Warsaw, are not so much literal illustrations of the commandments as fables inspired by them—very modern fables, it turns out, featuring relations between men and women, and parents and children, of a depth and intensity not seen since Ingmar Bergman stopped making movies in the early eighties.—*D.D.* (6/12/00) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

GIRL ON THE BRIDGE
A waifish young woman (Vanessa Paradis) attempts to drown herself but is saved by a knife thrower (Daniel Auteuil) who persuades her to join his act, where she becomes both nerveless victim and indispensable muse. He whirls her from one fancy location to the next, living on the slim proceeds of their success and gazing with avuncular disdain upon her incessant amours. The movie promises to be as steely as the flying blades, and the knife-tossing sequences in the circus or on-board ship make you flinch; but the director, Patrice Leconte, seems unable to match the coolness of his heroine, and the story droops into whimsy. Leconte has always been a hard man to fix: tilting from randy comedy ("Tango") to the starch of costume drama ("Ridicule"), he seems engaged rather than gripped by his subjects, and the new film maintains that air of an agreeable *jeu.* Why film it, for instance, in severe, bleached black-and-white? Was it merely a nice idea? Still, here is your chance to study the phenomenon that is Ms. Paradis—a huge draw in France and the beloved of Johnny Depp, who sports a similar set of cheekbones. In French.—*A.L.* (Angelika Film Center and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

THE HARDER THEY COME
Jimmy Cliff, the reggae singer, has the verve of an instinctive actor. In this crude but sensual 1973 Jamaican film, he plays a country boy who wants to become a pop star and who achieves his ambition only by becoming a famous killer; he reaches the top of the hit-record charts when he's on the Most Wanted posters. The film, directed by Perry Henzell, is feverish and haphazard, but the music redeems much of it, and the rhythmic swing of the Jamaican speech is hypnotic.—*Pauline Kael* (Anthology Film Archives; Aug. 4-5.)

JESUS' SON
The new Alison Maclean film, adapted from the short stories of Denis Johnson, is her first offering since "Crush," and it maintains her careful interest in careless lives. Billy Crudup, who gets more interesting with every movie, plays a chronic drifter. He falls in love, roughly speaking, with a junkie (Samantha Morton); some of their scenes together are hard to watch, but Maclean's direction is more tender than indulgent, and the movie grips hardest when times are most raw. As the mood lifts and lightens in the second half, the blaze of the film dies down. Still, not since Robert Altman turned his attention to Raymond Carver has a director seemed so determined to master the ramshackle.—*A.L.* (State and Union Square.)

LOSER
Jason Biggs, the boy who had an encounter with a pastry in "American Pie," and Mena Suvari, who wanted to be perfect in "American Beauty," get matched up in a minor but pleasing college-romance movie. Jason is an earnest fellow victimized by cheating undergraduate louts; Mena is a tough cookie, working her way through school, who has an affair with a smarmy young literature professor (Greg Kinnear). Except for the two heroes, everyone is caricatured (Kinnear is no better than a sitcom sleazebag), but some of the flip college idiom devised by writer-director Amy Heckerling is amusing, and the young stars, as they fumble their way to love, are often charming together. A movie for the tenderhearted only. Shot in the area around New York University.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.)

NEW WATERFORD GIRL
Liane Balaban, who seems to be Canada's answer to Natalie Portman, makes her screen début in this coming-of-age film as Mooney, a precocious teenager desperate to escape her bleak Cape Breton town. The screenwriter, Tricia Fish, wrote this script after she attended her own high-school reunion in Cape Breton, and she recognizes that the people left behind are often more interesting than those who left. Her portrait of New Waterford in the seventies, with its hockey-loving dads, promiscuous Catholic girls, and home-town Lotharios, turns out to be almost cruel in its precision. Allan Moyle, the director, does damage to the satire with lots of picturesque seascapes and dreamy closeups of Balaban, but it's not a mortal wound. Ex-brat-packer Andrew McCarthy has a small part as a jaded teacher who points Mooney toward New York, where she will no doubt write her memoir.—*Michael Agger* (Film Forum.)

NUTTY PROFESSOR II: THE KLUMPS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street

RICCARDO VECCHIO

Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly 1 and 2.)

THE PERFECT STORM

Man against the elements. Man is represented by George Clooney, which seems pretty flattering to the rest of us; he plays Billy Tyne, the captain of a fishing boat that set out from Gloucester, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1991. The elements are represented by a tempest of Shakespearean ferocity, although the Prospero in question was Industrial Light and Magic. What we see are humans being dwarfed by digital waves: a parable for our time. The story, based on Sebastian Junger's book, is true to life, give or take a few nautical miles and a bunch of dead dialogue, most of which goes to the women—headed by a weepy Diane Lane—left behind onshore. The screenwriter, Bill Wittliff, bends over backward to enliven the crew's relationships, but he basically falls overboard. For all the swell and spray, Wolfgang Petersen, the director, hasn't much to cling to here. Junger's book, which was crammed with great stuff about gales and gutting, was perhaps not as adaptable as Hollywood liked to think.—*A.L.* (7/10/00) (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

RIFIFI

A quartet of thieves breaks into a jewelry store, and for a tense half hour we watch as they work, silently. The film is like a highly skilled documentary on how to disconnect a burglar alarm and open a safe, and it is thoroughly engrossing, because we see the criminals as craftsmen, and we celebrate their teamwork, their finesse, their triumph. Ironically, we find ourselves sympathizing with their honest exhaustion after their dishonest labor. From there on, this 1955 movie, made in France, by the American director Jules Dassin, follows the tradition of "Scarface," "Public Enemy," and "The Asphalt Jungle" (and of "Macbeth" before them), bringing the tragic, trapped figures to a cadaverous finish. Along the way, Dassin keeps things actively vicious, with glimpses of underworld prostitutes and hopheads and a murder, a kidnapping, and the thrashing of a faithless mistress, who is stripped. "Rififi" is the granddaddy of a batch of suspense films featuring how to knock over safes or break into banks and museums, but its own chief distinction is its nasty tone. In French.—*P.K.* (Film Forum.)

SCARY MOVIE

What makes this film a better than average sendup of the "Scream" genre of horror flick is its subtext: a black director, Keenen Ivory Wayans (the most visible member of the hilarious Wayans clan), has made an amiable farce of a movie that also shows what white fear onscreen looks like to a black audience: another example of white privilege. In one scene, the heroine, who is being stalked in her own home, pauses long enough to send an E-mail to her local police department which reads, "White woman in trouble." Seconds later, the police arrive. It's a visualization of an old Richard Pryor joke that hasn't gone stale because it's still true, even in the world outside movie theatres.—*H.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly 1 and 2.)

SHAFT

His head shaved, his goatee minimalized (etched almost), and his body sheathed in black-on-black Armani, Samuel L. Jackson is a shaft all right, a walking blade of style. Until the movie collapses into an endless shoot-out, in which everyone in the tristate area allows himself to be blown away by the hero, this sequel to the 1971 film is mostly disreputable fun. Featuring an amazingly inventive performance by Jeffrey Wright as a Dominican drug dealer. Directed by John Singleton; written by Richard Price, Singleton, and Shane Salerno.—*D.D.* (7/3/00) (84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

SHOWER

In this lovely independent movie from China directed by Zhang Yang, a modern young fellow eager to make money comes home to the shabby Beijing neighborhood in which he grew up. At first, Da Ming (Pu Cun Xin) feels nothing but fear and disgust. He's bored by his elderly dad, who runs a musty old bathhouse, and frightened by his retarded brother, who loves the father and works happily amid the damp tiles. Groaning and complaining, men arrive every day to seek solace—the warmth of moisture, the laying on of hands. As far as Da Ming is concerned, the bathhouse is a home for the living dead, but he soon gets drawn into the lulling rhythm of the place, and so do we. "Shower" is all about people taking care of one another, and, as such, its mood is bittersweet, since caring opens one to the pleasures of family love but also to the pain of disappointment.—*D.D.* (7/17/00) (Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

SUNSHINE

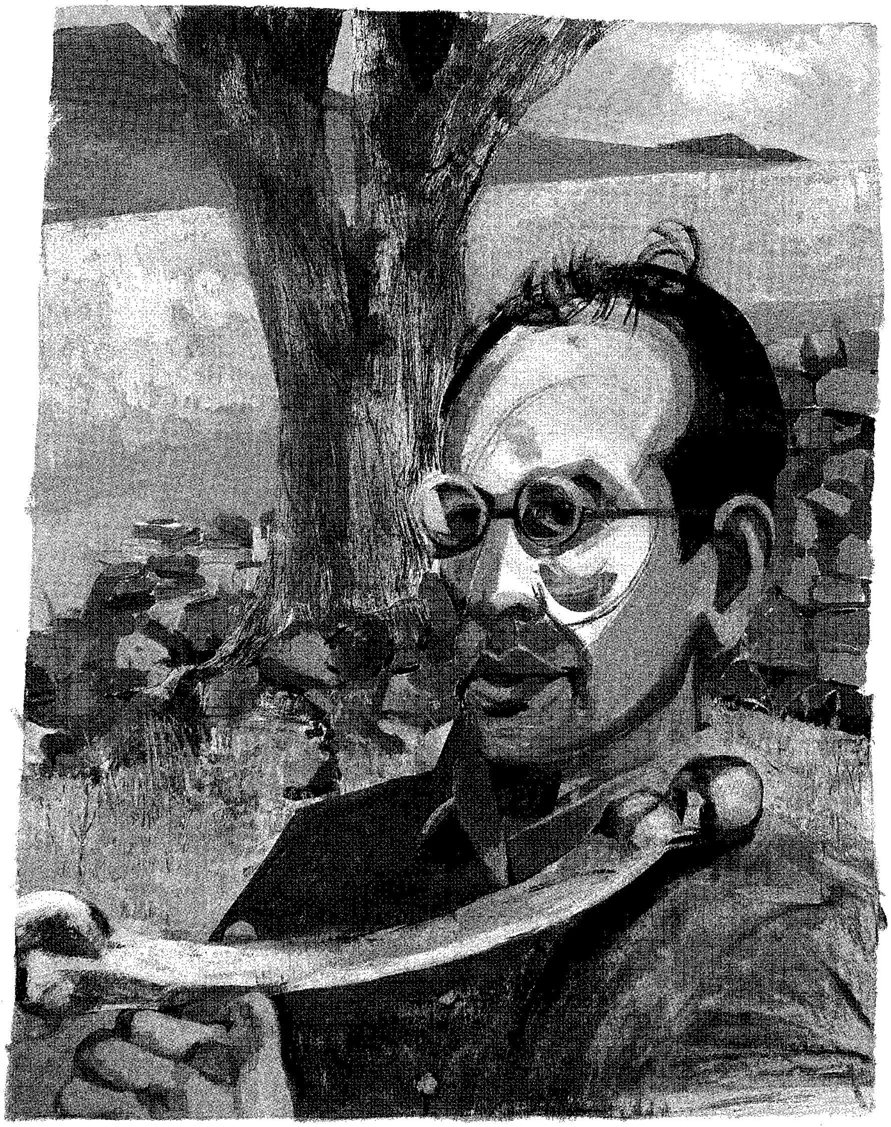
Stiff but continuously interesting and touching. The Hungarian director István Szabó, working with the American writer Israel Horovitz, uses the rise and fall of a large Jewish bourgeois family as the prism through which to view the last hundred years of Hungarian life. Ralph Fiennes plays the young man of the family in three successive generations—a patriotic judge, a champion fencer who is felled by anti-Semitism (in the film's best section), and an Auschwitz survivor who becomes a police interrogator in the Communist dictatorship. At its worst, the movie offers the slightly dolorous pleasures of leafing through a family photo album; at its best, it's exciting and heartbreaking, and it leaves an American viewer grateful for our banal but stable democracy.—*D.D.* (7/17/00) (Empire 25, First & 62nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG

Jacques Demy's musical romance about both first love and adult love is the rare movie that fully honors both. Everyone probably remembers something about "Umbrellas": that the dialogue is sung; or that its songs became international hits (one under the title "I Will Wait for You"); or that Catherine Deneuve and Nino Castelnuovo, as the salesgirl in her widowed mother's umbrella shop and the garage mechanic who lives with his aged aunt, are a surpassingly graceful couple. The mother (Anne Vernon) is also a wonderful character, worldly wise yet not sour; and after Castelnuovo is called up for service in Algeria, the globe-trotting Parisian who courts Deneuve turns out to be a hell of a guy, just as the gal Castelnuovo catches on the rebound becomes his rock of sanity. Demy uses his exquisite camera movements to follow the flux of characters who burst with ardor. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 5-6.)

WATER DROPS ON BURNING ROCKS

François Ozon, one of the better directors to come out of France in recent years, stumbles with this adaptation of a cheesy Fassbinder play. It's the typical Fassbinder setup—an older man seduces a younger innocent with disastrous results. The film takes place in an apartment, and Ozon does a good job at sustaining a decent, interesting rhythm in



Behzad Dourani in "The Wind Will Carry Us," a new film from Abbas Kiarostami.

cramped quarters, but the characters drag out their empty behavior past tolerance. In French.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

WHAT LIES BENEATH
A bag of reliable old tricks. In a beautiful lakeside house in Vermont, Michelle Pfeiffer quivers in terror as an insistent ghost plays tricks on her—opening doors, knocking over pictures, squirting toothpaste into her coffee. Robert Zemeckis, the director, even resorts to horror-movie standbys such as having a menacing person suddenly appear in the frame as Pfeiffer scans her surroundings with a pair of binoculars. The cinematography, by Don Burgess, is chastely beautiful, but the music, by Alan Silvestri, tears into your emotions with the violence of a rusty blade wielded by a maniac. Most of screenwriter Clark Gregg's dialogue is banal, and Harrison Ford, as Pfeiffer's husband, scowls in selfish indifference to her problems. The picture is effectively scary, at times unpleasantly so, but only in the last forty minutes—especially during a sequence in a bathtub—does it rise above cliché.—*D.D.* (Astor Plaza, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

X-MEN
The most beautiful, strange, and exciting comic-book movie since the original "Batman." The world, it seems, is filled with mutants—quirks of evolution and lost souls who band together for comfort and understanding. Feared by the regular humans, the mutants, according to Magneto (Sir Ian McKellen), will never be accepted, and since they are superior he believes they should either destroy the rest of humanity or supplant it. He's been engaged in a long quarrel about this with Professor Xavier (Patrick Stewart), a soft-spoken, wheelchair-bound sage with empathic powers. The film combines the fear of aliens invading us (an old sci-fi trope) with a spectacular war of the gods. The director, Bryan Singer, builds the characters and then lets the action flow from their special physical skills. With Hugh Jackman as the anguished warrior Wolverine; Anna Paquin as Rogue, a teen-ager who tries to make out with her nonmutant boyfriend and winds up putting him in a coma; and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos as Mystique, who can morph into anything, but whose preferred form seems to be a stunning nude blue silicone torso.—*D.D.* (7/24/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Chelsea West, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALICE AND MARTIN (7/31/00)
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

CROUPIER
BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd
Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and
The Screening Room.

THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE
Empire 25 and Quad Cinema.

THE FILTH AND THE FURY (4/3/00)
Art Greenwich Twin and Pioneer.

THE FIVE SENSES
Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas,
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Empire 25, and Lincoln
Plaza Cinemas.

HAMLET (5/15/00)
East 86th Street Cinemas and Gotham Cinema.

ME, MYSELF & IRENE (7/3/00)
East 86th Street Cinemas,
Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas,
and Union Square.

THE PATRIOT (7/3/00)
42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre,
Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd,
and Union Square.

TIME REGAINED (6/19 & 6/26/00)
Cinema Village.

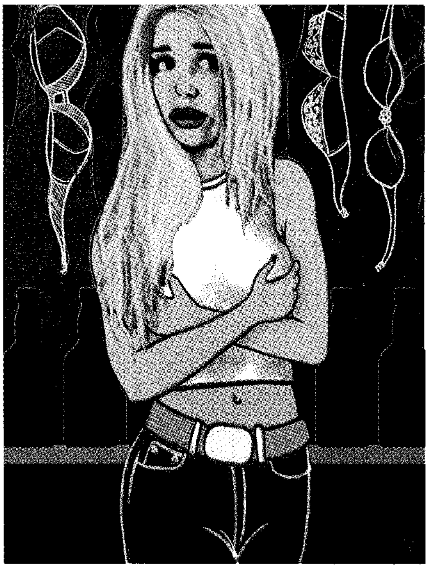
THE WIND WILL CARRY US
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

WONDERLAND (7/31/00)
Angelika Film Center.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.



Piper Perabo in "Coyote Ugly."

JOHN RITTER

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Sept. 3: "Behind the Mirror: American Film in the Fifties." Aug. 5 at 2: "Marty" (1955, Delbert Mann). ♦ Aug. 5 at 4: "Twelve Angry Men" (1957, Sidney Lumet). ♦ Aug. 6 at 2: "Rear Window" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Aug. 6 at 4:30: "The Wrong Man" (1957, Hitchcock). ♦ Classic movies. Aug. 5-6 at 6:30: "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (†).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—New filmmakers. Aug. 2 at 8: "Hostage" (2000, Frederik Sundwall). ♦ The "Sound & Vision" festival. Aug. 3 at 7: Rare, odd, and unique music videos. ♦ Aug. 3 at 9:30: "Beyond Ultra-Violence" (1997, Ian Kerkhof). ♦ Aug. 4 at 7 and Aug. 5 at 5: "Wild Style" (1982, Charlie Ahearn). ♦ Aug. 4 at 9 and Aug. 5 at 7: "The Harder They Come" (†). ♦ Aug. 4 at 11:30 and Aug. 5 at 9:15: "Decline of Western Civilization II—The Metal Years" (1988, Penelope Spheeris). ♦ Aug. 5 at 11:30: "Instrument" (1999, Jem Cohen). ♦ Aug. 6 at 7: "Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart" (1999, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Aug. 2-3: "Urbanworld 2000," seven films by Brooklyn filmmakers. ♦ A Gordon Parks retrospective. Aug. 4: "The Learning Tree" (1969). ♦ Aug. 5: "Shaft" (1971). ♦ Aug. 6: "Leadbelly" (1976). ♦ Aug. 7: "The Brig" (1964, Jonas Mekas). ♦ Aug. 8: "A Generation" (1955, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. (521-5700)—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing. Aug. 7: "Son of Frankenstein" (1939, Jack Otterson).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Aug. 2-8: "Rififi" (†). ♦ Aug. 4-8: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Artificially Real: Color in Film." Aug. 3 at 3: "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli). ♦ Aug. 3 at 6: "Desert Fury" (1947, Lewis Allen). ♦ Aug. 4 at 3: "Lady in the Dark" (1944, Mitchell Leisen). ♦ Aug. 5 at 5 and Aug. 8 at 3: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944, Minnelli). ♦ Aug. 6 at 2 and Aug. 7 at 6: "Singin' in the Rain" (1952, Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen). ♦ Aug. 6 at 5 and Aug. 7 at 3: "The Magic Box" (1951, John Boulting). ♦ Aug. 8 at 6: "Bonjour Tristesse" (1958, Otto Preminger; in French).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Sept. 17: "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends," a retrospective of the classic cartoon. Tuesdays through Sundays at 12:15, Thursdays at 6, and Fridays at 7.

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Aug. 2: "Taste of Cherry" (1997, Abbas Kiarostami; in Farsi). ♦ Aug. 5-6 at 3: "Woodstock" (1970, Michael Wadleigh).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 8: "Celebrating Philippine Cinema: New Directions 2000." All films are in Tagalog with English subtitles. Aug. 2 at 4, Aug. 3 at 6, and Aug. 5 at 9:30: "Gangland" (1998, Peque Gallaga and Lore Reyes). ♦ Aug. 2 at 6 and Aug. 6 at 3:30: "The Moises Padilla Story" (1961, Gerardo de Leon). ♦ Aug. 2 at 9 and Aug. 3 at 4: "The Kite" (1999, Gil M. Portes). ♦ Aug. 3 at 8:15 and Aug. 7 at 3: "José Rizal" (1998, Marilou Diaz-Abaya). ♦ Aug. 4 at 4 and 8:15 and Aug. 5 at 5:30: "Ada of Manila" (1999, Joel Lamangan). ♦ Aug. 4 at 6:15, Aug. 5 at 1:20, and Aug. 6 at 8: "Woman on a Tin Roof" (1999, Mario O'Hara). ♦ Aug. 5 at 3:30: "Sanda Wong" (1955, de Leon). ♦ Aug. 5 at 7:30 and Aug. 6 at 1:20: "Milagros" (1997, Diaz-Abaya). ♦ Movies for children. Aug. 5-6 at 11: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944, Vincente Minnelli).

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BEVERLY HILLS
LOS
ANGELES
10

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If Beverly Hills didn't already exist, Hollywood most assuredly would have invented it. And indeed maybe it did, given the glamour, elegance, and luxury that defines this garden-like, 5.69-square-mile sanctuary glistening in the hills of Southern California. The allure of this destination will be enhanced by the presence of the **Democratic National Convention** this summer at nearby Staples Center from August 14–17.

For living well, Beverly Hills wrote the book—make that the script, and screenplay too. Prefer to dine well? Beverly Hills boasts some of the finest restaurants (160 in all) in the region, from **Café Mirabeau** with its bird's-eye view of fashionable Rodeo Drive to **Nate 'n' Al's** deli, where comedy's funniest stars often stop for lunch. And if celebrity spotting is your favorite pastime, dine alfresco at the **Principe Ristorante** and watch the stars go by. For true gourmands, the venerable **La Scala**, with its celebrated wine list, serves sumptuous Italian cuisine. The cognoscenti can usually be found there—except sushi lovers who insist on **Matsuhisa**.

Long a cultural mecca in Southern California, Beverly Hills is home to world-class art galleries, museums, and auction houses—including **Sotheby's** and **Christie's**. For fine art, the **Gagosian** and **Grant Selwyn** galleries are always worth seeing, as is the nearby **Getty Center**, where the master collections are as impressive as the panoramic views of the city, mountains, and blue Pacific. From Beverly Hills, it is a short drive to the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**, where there is always a captivating array of cultural attractions and exhibits.

Any trip to Beverly Hills would not be complete without a visit to the famous **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** —Oscar's home—where there are free exhibits, movie-history lectures, and clips of filmdom's great costumes, scripts, and scores. More entertainment memorabilia is on display at the Museum of Television and Radio, which houses more than 75,000 classic radio and TV artifacts.

One of the best kept secrets of Beverly Hills is its majestic **Beverly Gardens**, a fourteen-block-long horticultural wonderland built in 1911 that is home to an awe-inspiring assortment of tree species as well as exotic shrubs and flowers. A walk in the park will provide all the exercise needed to get in shape for shopping on stylish **Rodeo Drive**, perhaps the most cosmopolitan thoroughfare of upscale boutiques anywhere in the world. Versace, Gucci, Prada, the list of elegant shops reads like a *Who's Who* of internationally renowned designers, including America's own.

The best way to spend Sunday morning in Beverly Hills is at the Beverly Hills **Farmer's Market** on the 200-block of North Canon Drive (9A.M.–1P.M.), where locals love to peruse the incomparable bounty of succulent fresh fruit, flowers, vegetables, and gourmet delicacies. Who is that glamorous couple in Gucci sunglasses strolling arm-in-arm past the maze of stalls? This is Beverly Hills, after all, where Hollywood and reality rendezvous.

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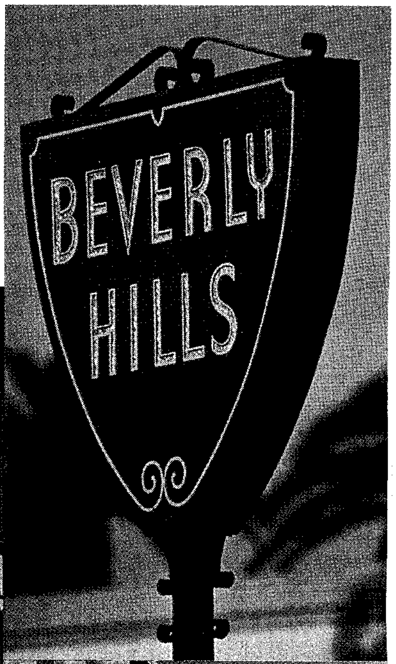

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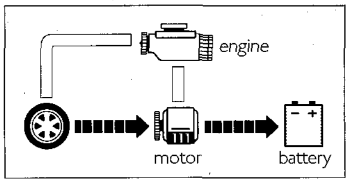

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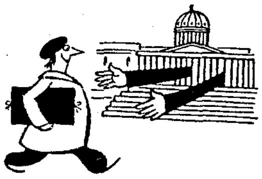
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

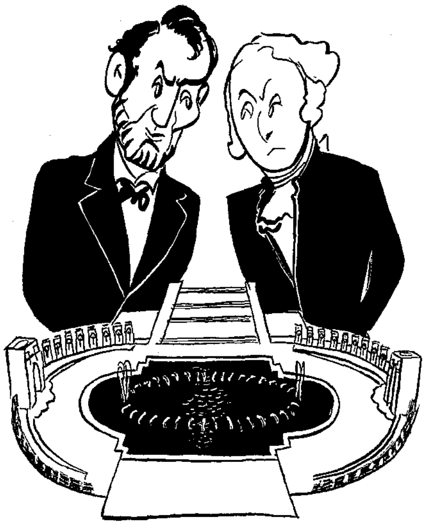
COMMENT
NOT IN OUR FRONT YARD



In 1789, the French architect Pierre Charles L'Enfant wrote to George Washington, offering to design the new capital for "this vast empire," as he called the United States. He laid out broad avenues and monumental government buildings, anchored by an immense open space, the Mall, running from the Capitol Building to the Potomac, with lots of room for the expressions of grandeur that he knew would come as the country grew. For most of this century, the Mall has been pretty much as L'Enfant envisioned it, but better. The view from the Capitol is punctuated only by Robert Mills's astonishing abstraction, the Washington Monument, and it terminates in Henry Bacon's great classical temple, the Lincoln Memorial. Plenty of other things have been added to the Mall—gardens, museums, more memorials—but they've been placed off to the side, so that the two-mile vista remains open.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

L'Enfant didn't figure on the fact that if he gave the nation a front yard someone would eventually want to take over the center of it. Since memorials have already been constructed to honor the dead of the Vietnam and Korean Wars, some veterans of the Second World War have demanded one of their own—only larger and more prominent—and they have just the place for it: seven and a half acres right in the middle of the Mall. The design calls for a sunken stone plaza ringed by fifty-six stone pillars, each seventeen feet high, and a pair of triumphal arches as high as a four-story building. One of the arches is supposed to represent the European theatre, the other the Pacific theatre, though they aren't particularly evocative of either, unless your idea of Europe is watered-down Albert Speer. And this is the simplified plan. The architect, Friedrich St. Florian, won a government-sponsored design competition for the memorial in 1996 with a scheme that was even bigger. The Commission of Fine Arts rejected that one, but it has now approved the new design—joining President Clinton, Bob Dole, Tom Hanks, and Wal-Mart, which helped to raise the hundred million dollars that will be required to build it.



It would be an aesthetic disaster for Washington if this monument were to be built, and not only because it would pave over open space made sacred by such events as Marian Anderson's 1939 recital and the civil-rights march of 1963. The memorial has the power neither of great classical architecture, like the Lincoln Memorial, nor of pure abstract forms, like the Washington Monument. And it certainly doesn't have the originality of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which stands at the edge of the Mall and is, respectfully, invisible from a distance. These monuments communicate ideas, and everyone understands them, instantly. The Lincoln Memorial is a temple to the Union, to Lincoln's anguish, and to our own. The Washington Monument is, symbolically, the axis around which the city revolves, and its singularity evokes George Washington's role in our history. The Vietnam Memorial, Maya Lin's wall of names cutting into the earth, at once acknowledges the pain of the war and honors the nobility of sacrifice. And the Iwo Jima memorial, based on the photograph of soldiers raising the American flag, celebrates heroism with the simple clarity of a Frank Capra movie, but no one who sees it forgets it. St. Florian's monument has no such drama, and it isn't beautiful as a shape. Almost all great monuments create a sense of awe, but this one looks ponderous, a bureaucrat's idea of classical grandeur. It's at once fussy and desolate.

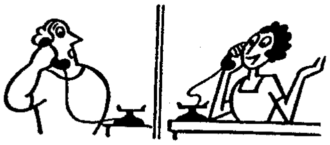
What makes Washington remarkable isn't just L'Enfant's plan. It's the counterpoint between the vast, formal spaces and the monuments, which express a degree of plain emotion that would be considered unseemly in most other capitals. Monuments—especially ones with a high emotional quotient—don't do well cheek by jowl. They aren't stores in a shopping center. The Mall is not a mall. Spacing the monuments out enhances their impact, even if it makes it harder to stroll from one to the next. It took a long time to get the Mall right; for much of the nineteenth century it was cluttered up with train tracks. It wasn't until the twenties that it began to look as it does now: the long Reflecting Pool in front of the Lincoln Memorial, balanced by the short Rainbow Pool (which would be altered by the new memorial), then open space, then the Washington Monument. It is a brilliant composition, in which the voids matter as much as the solids.

It's not that the veterans don't deserve a monument—though it is hard to imagine one more moving than Iwo Jima—and it's not that every inch of the Mall is inviolable. But the Mall as it is perfectly symbolizes everything that those who died were fighting for. To deface it in their name seems an odd way to honor them.

—*Paul Goldberger*

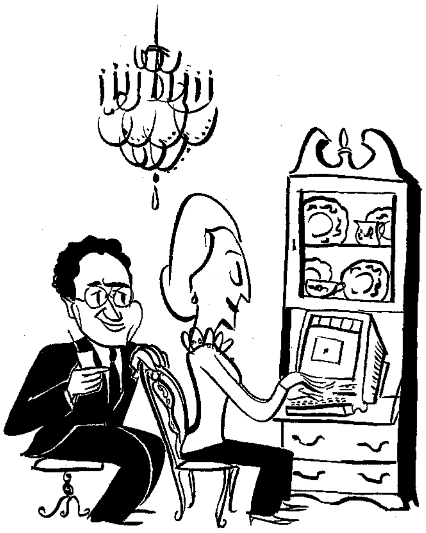
BRAVE NEW WORLD

A WIRED GUY WHO MAKES HOUSE CALLS



On a warm afternoon a few weeks ago, Craig Cohen, a pleasant-looking young man in a dark-blue Italian suit, was rapidly making his way up Madison Avenue, staying to the west side of the street, where it was shady. Every now and then, his belt would ring or vibrate—he had a cell phone, a pager, and an E-mail receiver strapped to it—and he would pause to field a call from "one of my ladies," as he put it. At Sixty-eighth Street, he got a call from a woman who was moving from New York to Scarsdale, and who was concerned about whether her new house was completely wired. Cohen explained in a patient voice that everything would be taken care of—the satellite dish, the high-speed Internet connection, the computer jacks in every room.

"They know my home phone number!" he exclaimed after he had holstered his phone. "They call me in the middle of the night! They come up to me in Sette Mezzo! 'Craig, can you fix my monitor?' 'Craig, when are you going to give me my next lesson?' 'Craig, Quicken isn't printing my checks. You've got to help!' " He went on, "Last night at ten, a client called me—she had stuck a regular floppy disk into her Zip drive and couldn't get it out. I ran right over."



Craig Cohen and a client

Cohen runs a company called Compushine. Although his primary business is installing satellite dishes and wireless services in apartment buildings, he has developed, more or less by accident, a lucrative sideline, which entails holding the hands of Upper East Side matrons as they take their first baby steps on the Internet. Cohen refers to himself as the help desk to the Upper East Side. His clients tend to be women, he said, "because powerful men of a certain age are not comfortable sitting down at a keyboard. They consider it beneath them." He charges a hundred dollars an hour, which is a good deal less than the psychiatrists in the neighborhood charge, often for not as much peace of mind.

At Seventy-second Street, Cohen stopped and pointed toward Park Avenue. "This is a great block for me, client-wise. Now they've all got digital cameras—that's the new big thing—so I've got to help them with those. Next, it will be wireless."

Six years ago, Cohen, who was teaching kindergarten at a private school in Manhattan, helped a friend of his mother's use the Internet for the first time. "She had heard that you could play bridge on-line with people in Singapore," he explained. The woman, a member of the Beverly bridge club, told her friends, and pretty soon Cohen had wired them, too. Then they told their friends. Laurence Tisch, the co-chairman of Loews Corporation, and his wife, Billie, told Lally Weymouth. Lizzie Grubman heard from her friend Rica Tarnoff, who heard from the Tarnopols. Cohen said, "Then I wired Bob Cohen, who is a divorce lawyer for half the women in the neighborhood. It's a very small world up here."

Arriving at the Tisches' apartment building on Fifth Avenue, Cohen turned off his cell phone and went in. The doormen recognized him and waved him through, as do doormen everywhere in the neighborhood. Cohen was greeted by Billie Tisch, who had set out some refreshments in the library, where she received her lessons. Mrs. Tisch, who was wearing tailored blue pants and a knit top, sat down at her laptop; Cohen hunched beside her. Of her husband's computer skills, Mrs. Tisch said, "He's not exactly a Luddite, but if I say, 'Look at this E-mail,' he won't, unless I print it out for him." Cohen nodded sympathetically.

Mrs. Tisch began her session by recounting a successful on-line shopping trip. She'd found a double baby bouncy seat for a friend whose granddaughter had recently had twins, selling for half as much as the same item at a store in the neighborhood. "And I did it all by myself," she said. Craig beamed. When Mrs. Tisch attempted to return to the baby-seat Web site, however, she couldn't find it. Craig talked her through it calmly: "O.K. Just click once. O.K., scroll. Now click." Still no luck. "O.K., let's search for it. Which search engine do you like?"

Mrs. Tisch preferred Ask Jeeves. "That or CEOExpress." Ask Jeeves found the site, and there was the double bouncy seat in question.

"Now, Craig," Mrs. Tisch said, "my friends say they are sending me pictures of their grandchildren, and I don't think I'm getting them. I got a message the other day and it just had gibberish and—"

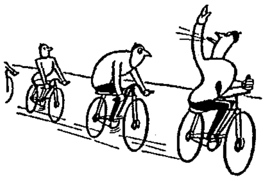
Cohen's pager had started to vibrate. It was the client from Scarsdale again. "Craig, call me as soon as you can!" the message said. This was what the future looked like for Craig Cohen: helping ladies get wired so that they could use the technology to reach him when he was busy wiring other people.

"Oy vey," he muttered.

—*John Seabrook*

THE SPORTING LIFE

A GREAT SEAT AT THE TOUR DE FRANCE



Just before the American Lance Armstrong—who won his second consecutive Tour de France on July 23rd—began the last of the twenty-one daily stages of the famous bike race, he invited the fervent, sometime biker Robin Williams, Armstrong's fan and a supporter of his cancer-fighting foundation, to hustle over to Paris and watch the finishing laps on the Champs-Élysées.

"So I flew right over, and next thing I knew I got to sit in the grandstand, right in the middle of the big *mishpocha*, next to the finish line near the Place de la Concorde!" Williams said urgently, on the telephone a couple of days later from the plane taking him back home to California. "I felt ten years old again!" he said. "To be that close! Watching all these amazing guys whoosh by, so fast, in a blur! It was like waiting outside Yankee Stadium and suddenly finding Joe DiMaggio! It gave you a big kick in the heart!

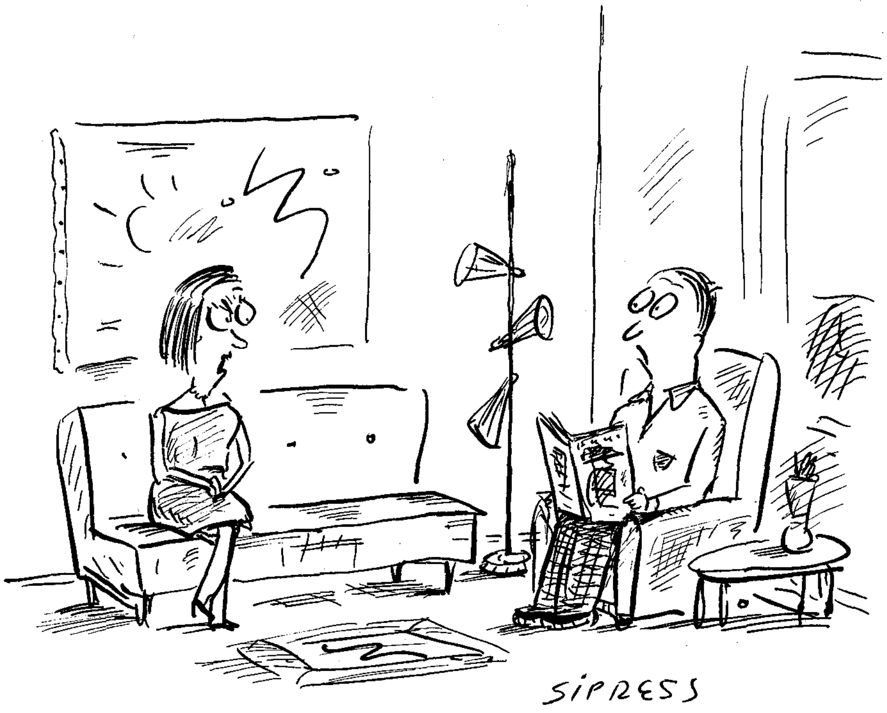
"These extraordinary cyclists looked as though they ride at twice warp speed. You know that joke. 'What does the snail say riding on the back of a turtle?' 'Whee!' Three laps, twenty-five miles each, around Paris. And on cobblestones! Just before the final laps, the officials came for us. '*Allons!*' Michael J. Fox, Eric Idle, and me. They put us in this little Renault, with one of those drivers, all of *them* also famous cyclists. Police escorts on motorcycles. We sped up. We went forty-three miles an hour, ahead of the pack of cyclists—the *peloton*. They went forty. They'd take the corners serpentining. 'Hey, isn't that great?' the driver yelled, barely avoiding a collision with another support car. You're supposed to take a corner slowly. Not them! Near the end, the *peloton* started sprinting. They were flying! Our Renault had this roof window, so Michael and I stood up through it to look back for a better view. The driver yelled, 'Don't block the mirror!' So we sat down. I had to watch the pack looking back out the side window. I felt like an Airedale in reverse.

"Lance had already won the Tour. He completed the two thousand seven hundred and seventy-four miles of the race in ninety-two hours, thirty-three minutes, and eight seconds. All he had to do at this point was keep up with the *peloton*. He was six minutes and two seconds ahead of everybody else because of his power earlier in the race, in the mountains, in the Alps and the Pyrenees. Because he was ahead, he stayed in the middle of the pack. Eric said, 'This is a seat you could never pay for!' When Eric and Michael and I got out of the Renault, we couldn't move. We were stunned. Finally, Michael said, 'Well, we'll always have Paris.'

"When Lance got his trophy, he held up his nine-month-old son, Luke, who was wearing a yellow jersey like his dad's. Luke has his father's concentration. He's got his father's stare. At the big celebratory dinner that night, I met an extraordinary group of people and took pictures with everybody. The U.S. Postmaster General and the Postal team's Swiss chef, who had to make nine thousand calories' worth of food for each rider every day. All the riders look as though they have two per cent body fat. I met Lance's oncologist—the man who saved him after he was diagnosed four years ago with testicular cancer that had spread to other parts of his body. I met Eddy Merckx, one of the most famous riders of all, who won all kinds of tours. I met five-time winner Miguel Indurain, of Spain! I met Greg LeMond, the only American who ever won it and won it three times! I felt like a little kid among giants. It was humbling.

"Lance gave me one of his yellow jerseys and autographed it! I love it! I'll never wash it! I'll frame it! I'll keep it all my life!"

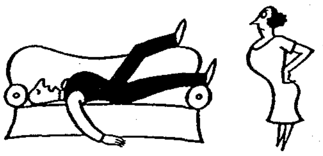
—*Lillian Ross*



"For one million dollars, what have I been talking about for the past ten minutes: the upcoming election, my mother, my job, or an article in the Home Section about kitchen makeovers?"

DEPT. OF MATING

SCIENCE EXPLAINS WHY MEN ARE LIKE THAT



So many girls have the same story. They meet a guy one night and fall for him. Who knows why? Maybe it's the faraway look in his eyes when he's looking at something far away. Maybe it's his thoughtfulness. Maybe it's just that he's basically presentable and doesn't dribble schnapps down his beard like the last one. Anyway, one thing leads to another, and they end up back at her place. It's all very beautiful, and when he leaves the next morning he looks into her eyes and says, "I'll call you." So she waits. And waits. And the call never comes. It's as if he'd completely forgotten about her.

Well, maybe he really has completely forgotten about her, and maybe it's not his fault: maybe he simply has a neurological disorder. In this month's issue of *Nature Genetics*, scientists at the Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center, in Atlanta, report on an experiment that suggests that the hormone oxytocin plays a key role in the ability of male mice to remember female mice with whom they have had contact. The researchers took male mice who lack the oxytocin gene and introduced the same female mice to them four times, at ten-minute intervals. Each time, the males, which were designated Oxt-/-, spent about the same amount of time familiarizing themselves with the females (by sniffing them), suggesting that they had no memory of the previous encounters. Male mice that do manufacture oxytocin spent less time sniffing the females on each successive meeting.

Sound like any men you know? "The mice figure in a broad research effort to describe the neurobiology of attachment," James Winslow, one of the authors of the study, said last week. "Early work has supported the notion that oxytocin is important in bonding between mothers and infants and between mates." This is true in several animal species—the prairie vole, for example, which is monogamous. Winslow cautioned against drawing conclusions about human beings, but he did say, "If oxytocin is playing a role in humans, it certainly could play a role in how people handle social relationships."

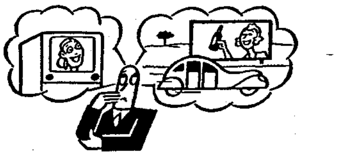
It is possible, then, that some male humans may be deficient in oxytocin and simply don't remember the encounters they have had with females the night before. This could be the reason they never call. For men who are so afflicted, admitting "I'm Oxt-/-" will take courage. But maybe it will make people think twice before engaging in a lot of negativity about "caddishness" and "big creeps."

What is this thing called the neurobiology of attachment? Is it just an accident that "vole" is "love" spelled backward, almost? For thousands of years, the poets have tried to answer these questions. Now Winslow and his colleagues are having their turn, with Y-mazes and olfaction and habituation tests. Experiments with a full moon, gin, and the auditory stimulus of Frank Sinatra are forthcoming.

—*James Collins*

SILICON VALLEY POSTCARD

A NEW KIND OF AD SPACE



Paul and Larry were looking for a clean surface to throw some light on. Larry was riding shotgun, navigating, because he had some specific ideas about where they could go in San Francisco to spread the word. He called it "making a good impression."

They pulled over on Lombard Street. "That's a beaut," Larry said. The "beaut" was a three-story apartment building with a nice, windowless back wall. The customers at Mel's Drive-In, tucking into cheeseburgers and malts, would see the message. So would drivers coming into the city from Marin County, especially if they craned their necks when they stopped at the red light.

While waiting for night to fall, Paul cranked up a fifty-five-amp generator and arranged a Pani projector in the back of the rented Ryder truck. He works for Staging Techniques of North Hollywood, a company that does lighting for special events. But lately he's been sent north to San Francisco to project giant advertisements onto the sides of buildings. Clients up here want something different, something that stops traffic. In a city where new dot-coms jam the airwaves with advertising, Paul and Larry are pioneering a new medium.

Their client this evening, like every Internet company, desperately needs advertising. The more people who know you exist, the more "eyeballs" you will get on your Web site. The eyeballs are what keep the whole dot-com train lurching forward.

Larry and Paul decided that it was show time—except for one little problem. The people at the advertising firm had sent slides that were a quarter inch too wide to fit in the projector. Paul improvised by taping the slide over the metal holder and flashed it onto the side of the building:

The
Rules
Are
Changing

But the name of the client—Datek, an on-line brokerage firm that launched in July, 1996—didn't appear at the bottom, because the metal slide holder was too small.

"I wish they'd sent better slides," Paul muttered, frustrated.

"Yeah, but that is an outstanding impression," Larry said encouragingly. "I mean, that's what advertising is, right?"

The fellows let the phrase flutter in the projector for a few minutes. A man passed by on the sidewalk, his head down. To try to make the message fit, Paul jammed the slide into the holder, despite the extra quarter inch. On Lombard Street the cars stopped at the red light. The full moon flashed through a hole in the fog. Paul and Larry peered up at the new message:

The
Rules
Are
hanging

The phrase gleamed in huge white letters against the side of the building.

"That looks pretty good," Larry said. Then he leaned over toward Paul and whispered, "What does Datek do?"

—*Rodes Fishburne*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

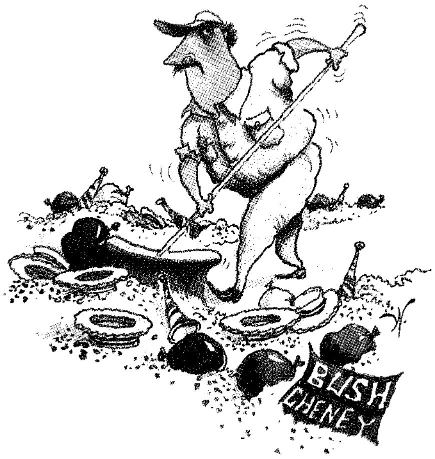
WHAT'S LEFT AFTER THE KAZOOS, THE CONFETTI, AND THE FUNNY HATS?

There are two big national political conventions this month, and one will cost local taxpayers four times as much as the other. In case you're wondering, the G.O.P. is the party on the dole; it's accepting seventeen million dollars from state and local governments. As always, people's hostility toward public-sector spending depends on how the money is being spent. But the more interesting question is why the money is on offer.

In one sense, the answer is obvious. Political conventions are "mega-events"—high-profile, one-time occasions that bring national attention and droves of tourists to a city. No wonder cities, or at least the people who run them, are generally happy to pick up the tab. As far back as 1860, Chicago spent six thousand dollars to build a new arena, the Wigwam, for the Republican Party convention at which Abraham Lincoln was nominated. The same goes, on a much greater scale, for the Olympics. The upcoming 2000 Summer Games, in Sydney, will cost the government there more than one and a half billion dollars.

Cities spend the money because they expect mega-events to generate millions in revenues, create thousands of good jobs, and revitalize their hollowed-out cores. The same expectations have led cities to spend hundreds of millions subsidizing new hotels, convention centers, and sports stadiums. (Philadelphia has shelled out at least a hundred and twenty-three million dollars in hotel subsidies just since 1998; Seattle paid about four hundred and seventy million for Safeco Field, where the Mariners play.) These subsidies are economically inefficient, and surely there are better uses for tax dollars—education comes to mind—than building luxury hotels for private developers. Yet, in the new world of what the sociologist David Ley calls "convivial cities," tourism and entertainment have become central economic pursuits, hotel socialism is the order of the day, and the mega-event is a holy grail. If you still harbor doubts, boosters typically commission economic-impact studies that make glowing claims.

Unfortunately, you can't take those studies at face value. Most of the jobs created by mega-events are both temporary and low-paying. And, with unemployment at all-time lows, the people you hire to build that velodrome will probably be leaving other jobs, not coming off welfare. In the case of conventions, studies tend to overstate the benefits of having a horde of joyous delegates descend on a city. A study done before the four-day 1996 Democratic Convention, in Chicago, pretty much assumed that the delegates would be staying the whole week and maxing out their credit cards at Marshall Field's. (And these were Democrats.) Its projections were off by millions.



Not that it's a bad thing for a city to host a mega-event. All things being equal, it's a great thing. Sometimes an event like the Olympics motivates a city to invest in necessary infrastructure like roads and ports which otherwise would not have been built. (This is what Tokyo did in 1964, Barcelona in 1992, and, to some extent, it's what Sydney is doing this year.) But then there's the 1976 Montreal Olympics. They ended up costing the public nearly $1.4 billion and their only legacy was a park. "The Olympics can no more have a deficit than a man can have a baby," Mayor Jean Drapeau had boasted. Say *Da-da.*

Not all mega-events are as badly run as the Montreal Games were—actually, *no* mega-event has been run as badly as the Montreal Games were—but the commonweal almost never gets as much out of these events as their proponents promise. Why, then, should the public foot the bill when most of the benefits go to the businesses that build the facilities the tourists use and sell the stuff the tourists buy? No incentives were required to bring the religious convention "Woman Thou Art Loosed!" to Atlanta, but it recently filled the Georgia Dome for the second year in a row, and brought five times as many people to Atlanta as the Republican Convention is bringing to Philadelphia.

Of course, the private sector will complain that it can't afford to stump for a big-ticket item like a baseball stadium or the Olympics. But it can, and it has. Remember the 1984 Olympics, in Los Angeles? Peter Ueberroth put together a private coalition that ended up turning a two-hundred-million-dollar profit—primarily by bringing in a lot more corporate sponsorship, jacking up television rights, and keeping costs under control. And the 1996 Games took that approach to a new level: Atlanta didn't spend a thing and wound up with six hundred million dollars in new stadiums and sports facilities, including Turner Field. Instead of tax dollars ending up in the pockets of builders and hoteliers, corporate money went toward public entertainment. A perfect 10 for distributive justice.

Which brings us to this year's Democratic National Convention. It's straight out of the Ueberroth mold, or as close to it as any convention has yet come. Its chairmen have raised almost thirty million dollars in cash and in-kind contributions, most notably from the Staples Center, where the Convention will be held. Granted, complete privatization of political conventions may not be appropriate. Most people still aren't ready to see Nike swooshes on Vice-Presidential candidates or Intel Inside stickers on the teleprompters. But why should a hospital orderly in North Philadelphia have to subsidize the party of small government? Advocates of welfare reform ought to act on their principles and get off public assistance. Delegates, thou art loosed!

—*James Surowiecki*

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VILLE ET VILLAGE

LETTER FROM CHINA

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

North Korea through a Chinese looking glass.

BY PETER HESSLER

On my third day in Dandong, I woke up at two in the morning with a thief in my hotel room. It was a midrange Chinese hotel, ten dollars a night, and Dandong was a midrange Chinese city, the sort of place you wouldn't pay much attention to if it weren't across the Yalu River from North Korea. But having North Korea five hundred metres away changed everything. Dandong promoted itself as "China's Biggest Border City," and the riverfront was lined with telescopes that could be rented by tourists, most of whom were Chinese hoping to catch their first glimpse of a foreign nation. The telescopes had signs that advertised: "Leave the Country for Just One Yuan!" For nine more, you could catch a ride on a speedboat and get a closer look at the North Koreans, who, during the heat of the day, swam in the shallows off their riverbank. On days deemed auspicious for getting married, it was a Dandong tradition for Chinese newlyweds to rent a boat, put life preservers over their wedding clothes, and buzz the North Korean shore.

There was a lot to think about in Dandong, and that was probably why I had forgotten to close my window that night. Because my room was on the second floor, I'd thought I was safe from intruders, but I hadn't noticed the foot-wide ledge that ran just below the window. Nor had I bothered to put my money belt and passport under my pillow; instead, I'd left them on a dresser, along with my camera, my wallet, my reporter's notebook, and a pair of shorts. The thief was scooping everything up when I awoke. For an instant, neither of us moved.

I sat up in bed and shouted, and he turned and ran for the door. I chased him down the hallway, wearing nothing but a pair of boxers. We rounded a corner, skidding on the tile floor. I caught him at the end of the hallway, by a stairwell.

I hit him as hard as I could. His hands were full of my belongings, and every time I punched him he dropped something. I slugged him and my camera popped out; I hit him again and there was my money belt; another punch and my shorts flew up in the air. After he had dropped everything, he ran down the hall, trying to find a door that would open, while I continued to shout and throw punches. At last, he found an unlocked door that led to an empty room and an open window. He jumped. I ran to the window and leaned out. The thief had been lucky—there was an overhang just below the sill. I heard his footsteps as he rounded the corner of the building. He was still running hard.

During the struggle, I had wrenched the middle finger of my left hand, so the hotel's night manager accompanied me to the Dandong hospital. It took us a while to wake up the doctor who was on duty. He yawned, popped the finger back in place, and took an X-ray of it. The finger looked crooked, so the doctor yanked it out of its socket again, and then put it back in place. This time, the X-ray machine failed to work, and the doctor said that I'd have to return later in the morning, when a technician would be on duty. I went to the police station, where I reported the crime, answered some questions, and filled out some forms. Finally, at 5 A.M., I went back to bed. I didn't sleep well.

A couple of hours later, the hotel owner showed up to escort me back to the hospital. He was a handsome man, who gelled his hair so that it swept, blue-black, across his forehead. He wore a new white button-down shirt and well-pressed slacks. He apologized profusely about the robbery, and introduced himself.

"My name is Li Peng," he said.

"The same name as the former Premier?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. He smiled in a tired way, and I could see that I wasn't the first person to have made this observation. Li Peng strongly advocated the use of force against Beijing students and workers in the protests of 1989, and he is the least popular leader in China. After the Tiananmen Square massacre, a Hong Kong newspaper reported that angry citizens were harassing twenty Beijing residents who happened to be named Li Peng. At least one of them had applied formally for a change of name.

"Do you like Li Peng?" I asked the hotel owner.

"No," he said, using English for emphasis. It was clear that he wanted to talk about something else. He asked me about the robbery.

I had already told the police everything I could recall about the thief: he had black hair, and he was somewhere between the ages of twenty and forty. He was smaller than me. I told the police that I wouldn't recognize him if I saw him again.

This vagueness had bothered them: how could you break your finger on another human being and remember nothing about him? It bothered me as well. I could remember details of the chase with incredible vividness—mostly, I remembered the overwhelming anger I'd felt, a rage that now scared me. The man himself was a blur in my mind. I could see that it also perplexed Li Peng, who wrinkled his brow.

"Was it a child?" he asked.

"No," I said. "It wasn't a child."

"But how did you catch him so easily?"

"I don't know."

"Do you have thieves in your America?"

I told Li Peng that there were thieves in America, but that they carried guns and you didn't run after them.

"Most thieves here in China have knives," he said. "What kind of thief doesn't carry a knife? That's why I think he was a child."

"He wasn't a child. I know that for certain."

"But why didn't he fight back? Why did you catch him so easily?" He sounded almost disappointed.

"I don't know," I said.

The police had followed the same line of questioning, and it was beginning to annoy me. The implication was clear: only a thief of unusual ineptitude would be caught and beaten by a foreigner at two in the morning, and so there must have been something seriously wrong with him. The police offered various excuses. He must have been a drunk. Or a cripple. Or an idiot who was desperately poor. Dandong, the police emphasized, was a modern, orderly city, with a growing tourist industry. It wasn't the sort of place where a foreigner woke up in the middle of the night with a common thief in his room.

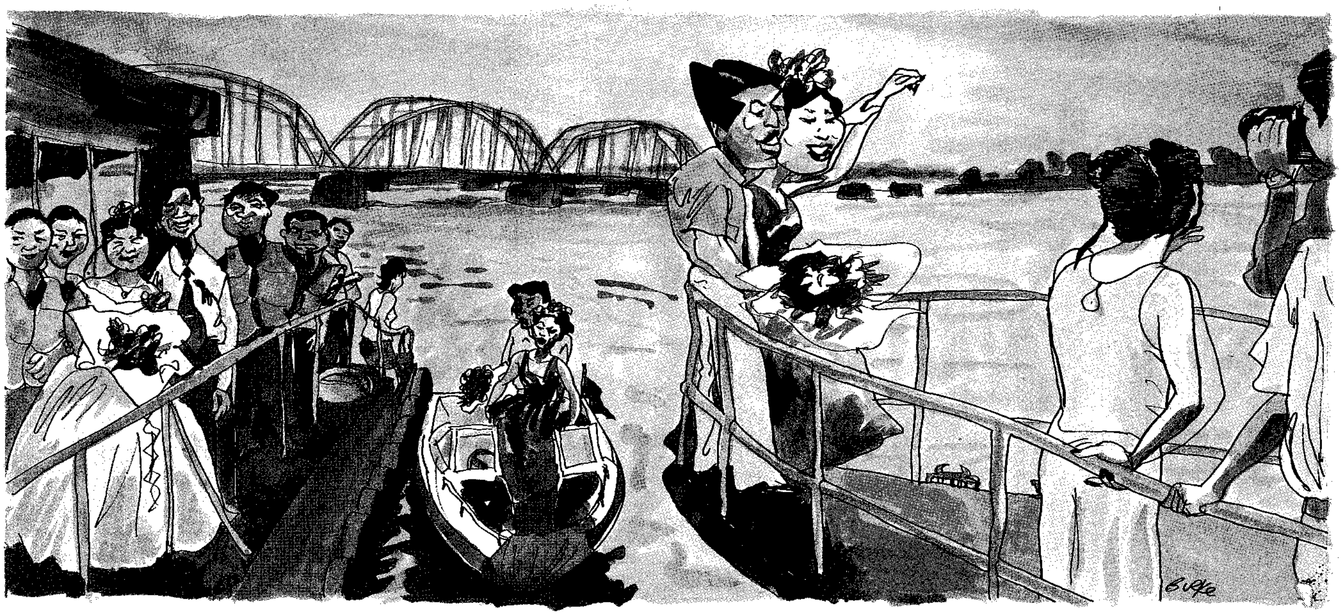
Nobody suggested what I suspected—that the man was a North Korean refugee. The police had assured me that there were few refugees along this part of the border, because Sinuiju, the North Korean city across the river, was relatively well-off. People in Sinuiju ate twice a day, according to Dandong residents who had relatives there. But I knew that farther east, where a famine had been particularly severe, an estimated seventy thousand North Koreans were fleeing to China every year. It seemed likely that at least a handful of them had made their way to Dandong. This possibility distressed me. If the locals wanted the thief to have been disabled, I wanted him to be perfectly normal and fit. It disturbed me to think that I'd viciously punched a man who was starving.

Both Li Peng and I were silent for a while, and then he thought of another possibility.

"Probably he was a heroin addict. That would explain why he was so weak."

"Are there a lot of heroin addicts around here?" I asked.

"Oh, no," Li Peng said quickly. "I don't think there are any in Dandong."



Newlyweds rented boats and buzzed the North Korean shore. It was the closest most of them would ever get to a foreign country.

PHILIP BURKE

Apart from the North Korean swimmers, the main tourist attraction in town was the Yalu River Broken Bridge, which had once connected Dandong and Sinuiju. In November, 1950, during the first year of the Korean War, American bombers destroyed most of the bridge when General MacArthur's troops made their push toward China's border. In Chinese, the war is known as "the war of resistance against America and in support of Korea." It is estimated that

"Bad news, Dad—you're brain-dead!"

a million Chinese died in the fighting.

Today, the Chinese half of the Yalu River bridge is still standing. Tourists can walk to the end of it, look at the bombed-out wreckage, and pay one yuan to stare through a telescope at the North Koreans. One morning after the aborted theft, I paid a yuan and looked through the telescope. As usual, the North Koreans were swimming. The worker at the telescope asked me what country I was from. I told him.

"If America and China had a war today, who do you think would win?" he asked.

"I don't think America and China will have a war today."

"But if they did," he said, "who do you think would win?"

"I really don't know," I said. It seemed like a good time to ask him how business was going. He said it was fine, and he added that he had a photography stand where tourists could dress up and have their picture taken with the wreckage of the bridge in the background. They could wear either traditional Korean costume or a full Chinese military uniform, with a helmet and a plastic rifle.

Another vender on the bridge ran a café where tourists could buy "Titanic" ice-cream bars, with pictures of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet on the wrappers. The café manager explained that although the bridge was state-owned, private entrepreneurs were allowed to rent space for their telescopes and soft-drink stands. It was an example of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." The ice-cream man paid five hundred yuan a month for his café. On summer nights, he slept on the bridge, where the river breeze was cool.

The bridge was at one end of the Dandong Border Coöperative Economic Zone, which the locals referred to as the Open District. They were very proud of the Open District, because it showed how far Dandong had come during the past ten years, after China's capitalist-style reforms finally started to take hold in this part of the country. People told me that a decade ago the Open District had been nothing but peasant shacks and makeshift docks. Now there were restaurants, coffee shops, ice-cream parlors, and karaoke halls. At the western end of the Open District, a luxury apartment complex, with Western-style villas, was under construction. It was called the European Flower Garden. The eastern end of the Open District featured the bombed-out bridge and the Gateway to the Country Hunting Park. Between the bridge and the luxury apartments there was a twenty-four-hour venereal-disease clinic and the Finland Bathing and Pleasure Center, a massage parlor whose marquee featured a photograph of a topless foreign woman taking a shower.

The Gateway to the Country Hunting Park was one of the recreational options available to Dandong's tourists, a place where they could hunt "wild" quail, pigeons, pheasants, and rabbits. The birds were tethered to the ground, and, for one yuan, tourists could shoot at them with either a .22-calibre rifle or a bow and arrow. For three yuan, they could take a potshot at a rabbit that was also tied to the ground. They were allowed to eat anything they killed. I never saw anybody shoot at the rabbit. It was too expensive.

One day, I watched two tourists from Guangdong hunt the quail. The young couple were in their early twenties, nicely dressed, and the man was very drunk. He missed so badly that the quail didn't even strain at their tethers. They just sat there in the sunshine. They were the most bored-looking quail I've ever seen.

"I'm too drunk," the man from Guangdong said to his girlfriend. "I want you to shoot instead."

"I don't want to shoot the gun," she said. "It's too loud."

"Here," he said. "You shoot it. I'm too drunk. I can't shoot straight."

"I don't want to."

"Go ahead. It's easy."

The man showed her how she could rest the gun on the fence so that it would be simpler to aim. Usually, customers weren't allowed to do that, but the park keepers were willing to make an exception because the couple had travelled all the way from Guangdong. I was sitting nearby, listening to the conversation and trying to remember which Hemingway story it recalled. In the best stories there were always guns, animals, women, and drunk people bickering. The only difference was that in Hemingway stories the animals were never tied to the ground.

Finally, the man persuaded his girlfriend to pick up the .22 and the keeper helped her prop the gun up on the fence. She shot three bullets, and every time she squealed and covered her ears. She missed badly. The quail appeared to have fallen asleep. It was late afternoon. Later, after it got dark, the Open District was a riot of lights, neon and fluorescence blazing from the restaurants and karaoke bars and the Finland Bathing and Pleasure Center. Meanwhile, across the Yalu, there was complete darkness on the North Korean shore. There was no electricity over there. The North Koreans didn't go swimming at night.

I got to know a couple of the local boat pilots, and several times a day they'd drive me along the banks of North Korea. We'd cruise by run-down tourist boats that were empty except for the portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on the walls, and we'd pass factories that looked abandoned. On the sandy stretches, hundreds of North Koreans were swimming. The children smiled and waved when we went by. Farther upstream, where the river narrowed, it wasn't unusual for adventurous young Chinese to swim across the Yalu, touch the far side, and swim back again. There weren't any North Koreans swimming to China. On the Sinuiju bank, armed soldiers stood stiffly at their posts, watching over the swimmers. They were like lifeguards with guns.

One day, we cruised past a barge where soldiers were unloading bags of grain marked "USA," which had been donated through the United Nations World Food Program. I asked the pilot to draw closer. When we got to within thirty feet of the barge, one of the soldiers glared at me and made an obscene Korean gesture: a fist with his thumb poking out between the fingers. We sped off.

"All that food will go to the soldiers and the cadres," the pilot said. "None of the common people will get it."

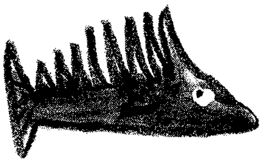
He spoke matter-of-factly—the way everybody in Dandong did when I asked about their neighbors. They were quick to say that the North Koreans were poor and that they had bad leadership, but then they'd shrug and say, "*Meiyou yisi*"—"It's not interesting." They weren't concerned by the North Koreans' poverty or by their isolation; everybody who had lived in China through the sixties and seventies had seen enough of that.

Ordinary Chinese tourists buzzed the Korean shore simply because it was the closest they'd ever get to a foreign country; wealthy tourists, however, could enter North Korea on organized tours. Passports weren't required; the regulations were lax because the Chinese government was pretty sure that no one would want to stay on the other side of the river.

Every morning, tour groups of upper-class Chinese met in front of my hotel before leaving for North Korea, and one day I watched a guide give a briefing. The guide explained that the tourists should be careful to show respect when they visited memorials to the North Korean leaders, and he said that they should avoid taking photographs of people laboring, because the North Koreans might accuse them of focussing on poverty. The North Koreans are proud people, and the Chinese need to be conscious of this, he said. Also, when visiting the thirty-eighth parallel, it was important that the Chinese not shout "Hello!" at any American soldiers on the other side.

"You'll notice that it's not as developed as China," the guide said. "You shouldn't tell the North Koreans that they need to reform and open up, or that they should study the example of our China. And remember that many of their tour guides speak very good Chinese, so be careful what you say."

One day, I met a Chinese veteran of the Korean War. He had been in the Navy and hadn't seen much action during the war, but in 1964 he'd been wounded in a battle off the coast of Taiwan. He was sixty-four years old and had been a member of the Communist Party for four decades. He walked with a limp. The enemy who wounded him had been Taiwanese, but his weapon was American-made. The veteran pointed this out very carefully. As far as he was concerned, everything had gone downhill after Mao died. "Nowadays too many things aren't certain," he said. "Some of the retired people don't get their pensions. And some people are too rich while others are too poor." He disagreed with the views of the younger generation, including those of his twenty-six-year-old son, who had turned down a perfectly good government job to join a private firm. The firm paid more, but there wasn't as much stability. Was this, he asked, how Americans lived? And had his son learned to think this way from the foreign teachers at his college?



I asked the veteran about the situation across the border, and he said that North Korea had a leadership problem. "When Kim Il Sung was alive, he was like Chairman Mao—everybody worshipped him. But Kim Il Sung's son isn't as great as his father. He's too young and he hasn't been hardened by war. If you look at Kim Il Sung's life, he experienced war as a small boy. That's why he became a great man."

My hotel room picked up North Korean television, which was one reason that I continued to stay there even after the attempted robbery. The other reason was that Li Peng gave me free food and drinks at the beer garden out in front. I had become a local celebrity—the Foreigner Who Broke His Finger Fighting the Thief.

When it rained, I sat in my hotel room eating cookies and watching North Korean television. North Korean television had everything that fascinated me about Chinese television, but more of it. There were more military variety shows, more patriotic bands, more heroic leaders. The songs were more cloying. The smiles were bigger. The uniforms were more uniform. There were more programs of singing and dancing children wearing heavy makeup.

I got to the point where I could watch North Korean television for nearly an uninterrupted hour. There was the news, which consisted of showing the front page of a newspaper while a commentator read it. There was the great leader, Kim Jong Il, wearing dark glasses and pointing at maps. An Army choir, some violinists and some singers—all dripping with medals. Kim Jong Il visiting a factory. Children in makeup bouncing across a stage. Kim Jong Il in the T'aebaek Mountains. Pyongyang at night. Miners working happily. Children singing. Kim Jong Il.

At night, I dreamed of being robbed.

I'd wake up, my heart racing, and I'd lie there trying to recall what the thief had looked like. But mostly I remembered what he had felt like. I remembered his body recoiling from one of the blows, and I remembered hitting him again. I found myself thinking about my anger and his fear—the two emotions shifted uneasily in my mind. What had made me keep punching him, even after he'd dropped my valuables? And why had he not fought back?

On my last afternoon in Dandong, the river was full of Chinese wedding boats. At any given moment, there were half a dozen on the water, the couples posing in the prows as they glided past the North Korean shore. The wealthy couples hired big two-tier cruisers; the others rented little motor launches. All of them followed the same route—a scoot out to the ruined bridge; a pause for photographs; a slow cruise along the banks of North Korea. The Chinese brides wore bright dresses of all colors—white and pink and orange and purple—and they stood in the prows of the boats like flowering figureheads. It was a hot afternoon and the North Koreans were swimming again.

I went out with a pilot named Ni Shichao, and we zipped in and out of the flotilla of wedding boats. Ni Shichao explained that it was a very auspicious day on the lunar calendar—the sixth day of the sixth month—which was why there were so many weddings. But on the whole, he said, there were fewer weddings than usual this year.

"People think that years ending in nine are bad luck," he explained. "I don't believe it myself, but many people do. In '89 there was the disturbance"—a euphemism for what happened around Tiananmen Square—"and in '79 there was the trial of the Gang of Four. Sixty-nine was the Cultural Revolution. Fifty-nine was when your America bombed the bridge."

He paused and thought for a moment. "No, that was in 1950," he said, shaking his head. "Anyway, something bad happened in '59."

That had been the climax of the Great Leap Forward, when Mao's mad push for greater industrial production resulted in a famine that killed an estimated thirty million people. But Chinese history books brushed over this disaster. As with many Chinese, Ni Shichao had a shaky grasp of recent history; he had also made a mistake about the Gang of Four trial, which took place in 1980 and 1981.

"What about 1949?" I asked.

"That was when the new China was founded," he said. He paused again. We were in the shadow of the ruined bridge; the slow-moving Yalu flowed blue beneath us. "That year wasn't the same as the others," he went on. "That was a good year, of course."

A week after leaving Dandong, I went east to Tumen, a Chinese city on North Korea's northern border. Tumen was poor; it had none of Dandong's energy and development, but it still drew hordes of refugees from North Korea. The Tumen River was narrow here, and this stretch of the North Korean countryside was reported to have suffered some of the worst effects of the famine that had been devastating the country since 1995. Almost nobody went swimming in the murky Tumen River. The border was heavily guarded on both sides. The Chinese promenade had a few souvenir stands and telescopes, but there weren't many tourists. You couldn't see much across the river.

I walked along the promenade and passed a child sitting in the shade. I approached him from the back, thinking that it was a local boy about seven years old, but then I saw his face, and I stopped. I had never seen so many different ages in a single person. He had the body of a young child, but from his face I could see that he was older, probably fourteen or fifteen. The corners were wrinkled, the skin shrivelled like an old man's, and there was a gray dullness in his gaze that startled me.

I stared at the boy and realized that he was a North Korean who had come here to beg. In that moment, everything I'd glimpsed about this closed-off country—the swimmers and the soldiers and the television programs—slipped away. The boy gazed back. Finally, I fumbled for my wallet and pulled out some money. He accepted it without changing his expression. Neither of us said anything. I felt his eyes on my back as I walked away. ♦

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SEARCH ME

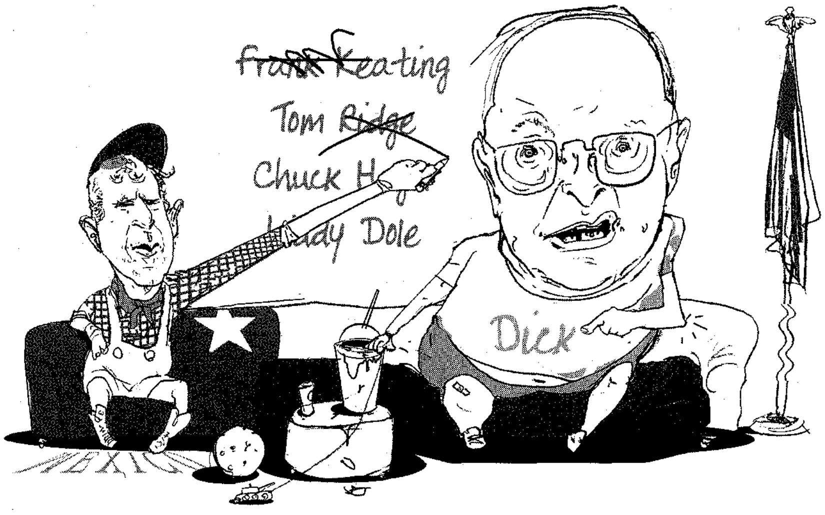
BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

"I was impressed by the thoughtful and thorough way he approached his mission."
—*George W. Bush, on selecting Richard Cheney as his running mate.*

"Good morning, George."

"Good morning, Dick. So, ya got some recommendations for me?"

"We looked at a wide range of potential Vice-Presidential candidates. I don't need to tell you, it's quite a challenge finding just the right person."



ISTVAN BANYAI

"That's why I put you in charge of the search, Dick. So, whaddaya got?"

"Frank Keating, governor of Oklahoma. Very solid guy, Catholic, handled the bombing well. On the other hand, Oklahoma is pretty close to Texas."

"Isn't it, like, right next to Texas?"

"We're looking into that. But we believe so."

"Well, to hell with that. Next."

"There's Tom Ridge. He's pro-choice, Vietnam veteran."

"Good man. Pennsylvania. Big state. Drove across it. Took a helluva long time."

"Some people might contrast his war record with, um . . . Well, there's hardly any shame in flying an F-102 in the Texas Air National Guard."

"What if Mexico had invaded? What then?"

"Exactly. But there's the problem that 'Bush-Ridge' sounds like a gated community. I'd like to see a Vice-President with some hard consonants in his surname."

"Pataki?"

"Those are pretty hard consonants."

"Does sound sorta foreign."

"I went to Albany, took his measure."

"And?"

"He's got six inches on you."

"I don't want a V.-P. who's gonna be hovering over me at the Convention like some damn Empire State Building."

"We could dig a trench for him, but it might make more sense to have someone shorter. Maybe less hair, glasses."

"What about Chuck Hagel?"

"Extremely good man. But with him we would have the Vietnam-hero problem. Plus he's awfully healthy. It might make sense to have someone less physically robust than yourself. Weak knees, chest pains, something along those lines."

"What about McCain? He's got a bum arm."

"We talked to him. He kept referring to you as an 'F-102-flying pimple-faced puke.' He didn't close the door, exactly."

"You know, for a time there it looked like Mexico was gonna invade. No one ever talks about that."

"McCain would certainly be lively. Of course, there's the risk he'd get all the coverage. It might make sense to have someone on the quieter side. Maybe even a bit bland. But good bland."

"Bland is good. I can see bland. What about Danforth?"

"I'm a big fan of Jack. His leadership in the Clarence Thomas nomination was superb. In fact, if it hadn't been for him Clarence Thomas might not be sitting on the Supreme Court today."

"Well, yeah, there's that. Who else?"

"Liddy Dole."

"She's solid, but, honest to God, I think I'd have to start taking Viagra, too, before I climbed into bed with her. I mean that respectfully, of course."

"There's another problem. 'Bush-Dole' sounds like a ticket that's already run."

"And lost."

"I think we're looking for a name that's familiar without being annoying."

"Bush-Powell! What's the latest?"

"I drove out to his home to beg him once again, as you requested."

"And?"

"He opened fire on me at a hundred yards. I'm getting a pretty strong sense from him that he doesn't want the job."

"Damn. I told his wife, 'Alma,' I said, 'we'll put a thousand Secret Service agents on him, give him a limousine made outta titanium. Hell, we'll plate him with titanium.' Wouldn't budge. Kills me. What about Tiger Woods? He's gotta be a Republican by now. Look at all that money he's making."

"There is one problem."

"What's that?"

"Do we want a Vice-President closely associated with golf on a Bush ticket?"

"See your point. This is frustrating, Dick. Let's sum up here. Whadda we got?"

"We're looking for a non-Oklahoman who hasn't won a Bronze Star, with a not-too-hard consonant in his last name, who's slightly shorter than yourself, a little chunky, balding, has spectacles and a medical history, who doesn't speak disparagingly of you or walk with a limp from being tortured by North Vietnamese, who dares to be bland, whose last name is pleasantly familiar, and who led the country to victory in Desert Storm."

"Where are we gonna find someone like that by next Tuesday?"

"I'll try to have some more names for you when I get back from Wyoming." ♦

THE SPORTING SCENE

A STUD'S LIFE

At the top of his profession and loving his job.

BY KEVIN CONLEY

My first contact with the world's No. 1 stud at his place of business—that would be Storm Cat, at the stallion complex on W. T. Young's Overbrook Farm, in Lexington, Kentucky—came over the phone. "There's his holler now," Dr. Joe Yocum, the farm vet, said calmly, from his office in the breeding shed, above a noise that sounded like the fury of hell. "He just jumped on her. I'll look out my window here and tell you when he's finished. . . . Yup." The doctor chuckled. "He wouldn't be real popular with the women."

The Kentucky Derby is often called the most exciting two minutes in sports; Storm Cat is probably its most expensive thirty seconds. His stud fee for the 2000 season hit three hundred thousand dollars, nearly double that of his closest rival. It could easily have gone higher. A final pair of contracts offered at auction last November, before the farm shut his book for the season, brought in four hundred and fifteen thousand and four hundred and thirty thousand dollars, respectively. Based on a conservative estimate of seventy guaranteed-live-foal contracts, Storm Cat will earn twenty-one million this year. If he played in the N.B.A., that figure would make him the league's third-highest-paid player. As a stud, no one's even close.

Why would anyone pay that much for Storm Cat's services? Last year, Storm Cat's offspring earned more than twelve million dollars at the track, almost four million more than anyone else's. Furthermore, several Storm Cat colts who have recently launched their own stud careers—Storm Boot, Hennessy, Forest Wildcat—have begun siring stakes winners and high-priced yearlings, justifying hefty hikes in their stud fees. In other words, just thirty seconds with Storm Cat gives you a chance of landing your own franchise Thoroughbred.

If he were any other breed—miniature, trotter, quarter horse, Standardbred, Lipizzan, Arabian, American warmblood—Storm Cat could just jump on a padded phantom breeding mount (like a pommel horse, but "natural, mare-like," and equipped with a "side opening and quick release valve") and his half of the bargain could be frozen and shipped Priority Overnight to any mare in the world. But Storm Cat will never suffer this indignity, because the Jockey Club, the official registry of Thoroughbred racing, forbids artificial insemination. Only registered horses can race on the Thoroughbred circuit, and the Jockey Club registers only horses conceived by what is delicately termed "natural cover." Storm Cat's job—and the most profitable sector of a high-stakes industry—is safe.

Success at the track is merely a first step toward such profits. Take Cigar, who won sixteen races in a row and retired to stud in 1997, after earning a record $9.9 million. Not one of the eighty mares booked for his first and only season became pregnant, but his owners were lucky: Italy's Assicurazioni Generali made good on Cigar's $25 million infertility-insurance policy. Far more common than infertility is mediocrity, and no policy covers the champion horse who fails to produce a winner. As Tom Wade, the groom to the 1977 Triple Crown winner, Seattle Slew, said, "Just because a horse wins a million dollars, that don't make him no stud."

For a stallion, the eagerness of a teenager is considered the mark of a professional—breeders call it "great libido." Although Storm Cat's libido is spoken of mostly in economic terms, from time to time something else creeps in: awe, fear, relief. Breeding horses is dangerous—last March, Class Secret, a twelve-year-old son of Secretariat, the 1973 Triple Crown winner, had to be euthanized after a mare he was mounting broke his leg—so dawdling is not appreciated. It's risky for the people involved, too. One stallion manager told me that sildenafil citrate—Viagra—had been tested on horses and rejected, largely because no-

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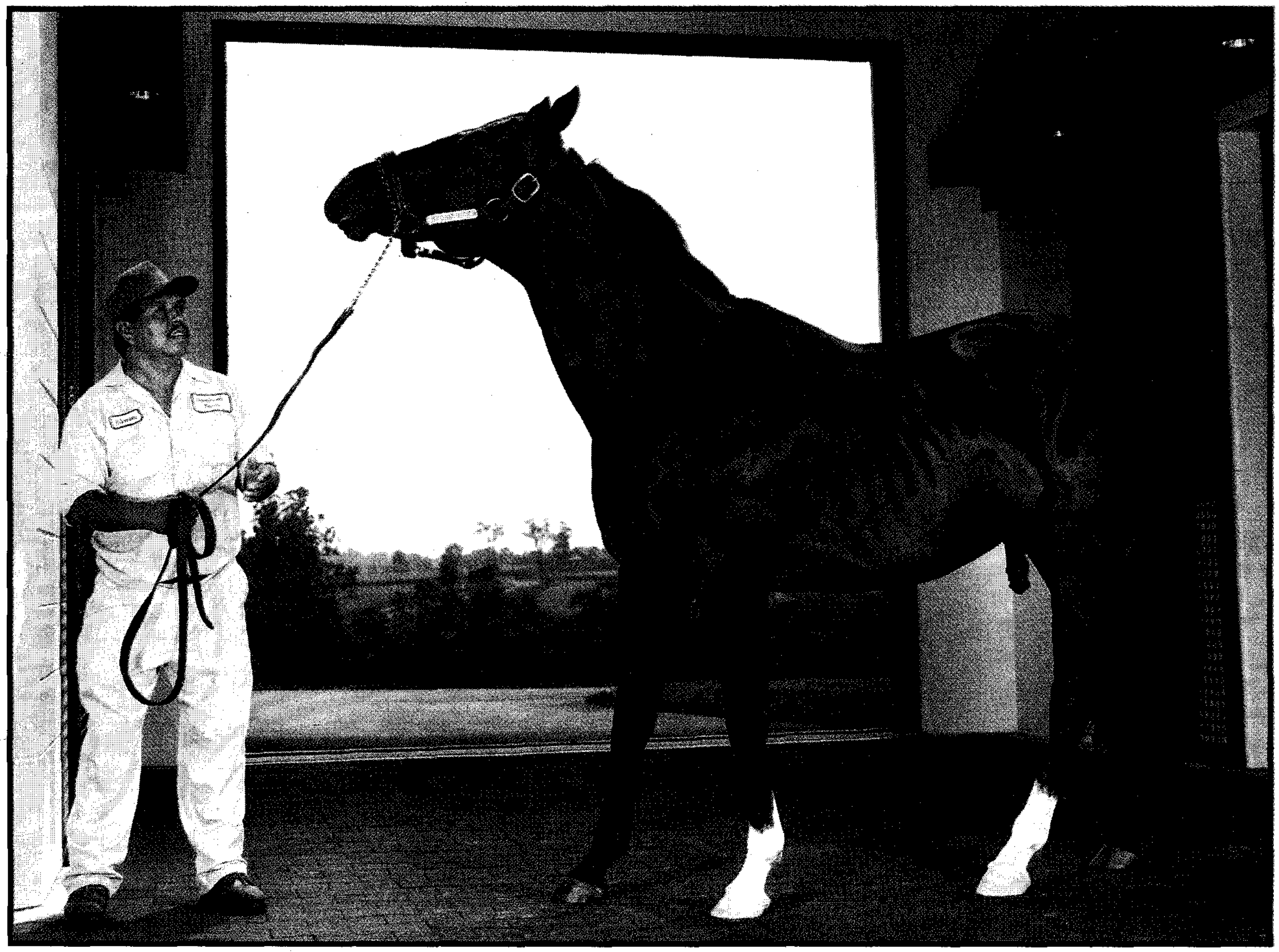
body who works in the breeding shed wants to fool around with a rearing half-ton, hormonally enraged animal trying to set a personal endurance record.

With a horse like Storm Cat, however, the worrying doesn't stop at the breeding shed. He's only seventeen years old, comfortably mid-career for a stud (Mr. Prospector, the sire of this year's Derby winner, Fusaichi Pegasus, was twenty-nine when he died last year). But even innocent conversations about him—what he likes to eat (bluegrass, oats, and sweet feed), where he sleeps (in a hilltop barn, near his winter paddock), what he does for fun (lies down in a big sandpile and rolls around)—tend to veer into elaborately imagined premonitions of his death and the state-of-the-art precautions taken to guard against it. One of his sandpiles, for example, is bounded by an unusual stretch of solid wood, because somebody worried that he might roll a foreleg under the standard fencing and break a bone as he tried to stand up. And if you want to meet the farm's entire staff in the next forty seconds? Just light a cigarette near Storm Cat's stall.

On a sunny morning in May, halfway through the four-and-a-half-month breeding season, the sire looks vigorous. In his official photographs, Storm Cat can come across as smug and bullnecked and a little thick in the waist, but the camera must add a few pounds, because in person, prancing in his paddock, he has the hauteur and the low body fat of an underwear model. He's a dark bay, but when he moves in the sunlight you can pick up flashes of a honey-gold color that comes from the chestnut horses on his mother's side—Terlingua, Storm Cat's dam (his mother), and his grandsire, Secretariat. He has white spats on his left legs, also from Terlingua, which give him a light-footed, high-stepping look, even when he's just pacing over the grass.

"I like his weight now," Wes Lanter, who manages the ten stallions at Overbrook Farm, says. "Twelve hundred and sixty pounds. I think that's a real good weight for him." Lanter runs the operations in the breeding shed with the nimbleness of a linebacker coach, but everywhere else he moves with hound-doglike deliberateness. To introduce me to the planet's most valuable piece of horseflesh, for example, he folds his arms and says, "There he is." At first, Storm Cat just rips at the grass, pretending he doesn't see us, but after a while he edges over to the fence to investigate. He has a smoldering dark patch between his eyes with a white diamond on it, and a sharp crescent moon way over near his left nostril, a curious marking that makes him look moody and dangerously attractive. He ducks his head behind a board on the fence and gives me the once-over—more eye contact than his mares usually get—and I raise my hand to the little white line that runs down his muzzle. "Stand back," Lanter says, since stal-



Storm Cat's fee hit three hundred thousand dollars—the most expensive thirty seconds in sports. Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

SABA

lions bite. "He can fool you." As soon as I touch him, Storm Cat ends the interview and walks away.

Suddenly, he lights out for the end of his paddock. Through a break in the trees, he looks over the creek, past the horses nearer the breeding shed—it's standard practice to place stallions with libidos lower than Storm Cat's closer to the parade of action, a cheap sort of stimulant that cuts down on the time spent waiting for arousal—and roars convincingly. "A mare has arrived," Lanter says. "Not yours, Stormy." Undeterred, Storm Cat paces back and forth beside the fence—he has worn a path there—and roars again. Lanter seems pleased, in a proud and wistful prom-chaperon way. "He's looking for dates," he says.

Storm Cat has seven hundred and fourteen children at last count, but he has seen only three: Mountain Cat, who was recently shipped off to Turkey, and two fellow-studs on the roster at Overbrook Farm—Tactical Cat, a pretty gray horse (whose dam was Terre Haute), and Tabasco Cat, the winner of the Preakness and the Belmont in 1994 (whose dam was Barbicue Sauce). They often pass each other on the way to or from the breeding shed and he cuts them every time—no nicker, no friendly whinny. Apart from a few pointed, work-related roars, Storm Cat is laconic, even for a horse. But it's a menacing, eloquent sort of silence: it's on purpose.

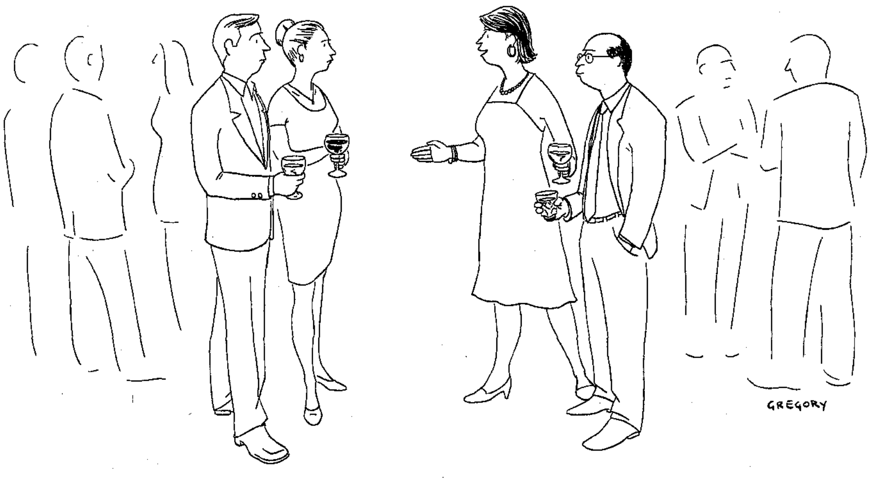
Menace, apparently, is a job requirement for stallions. The senior managers at Overbrook, who generally live in picturesque houses tucked into the farm's manicured hills, like to expound upon the equine instinct for violence. They'll tell you how, in the wild, a lone stallion would command a roving harem-cum-nursery of broodmares and foals, until some other horse, probably one of his own sons, decided to bite, kick, and break his legs for it. Add to these instincts a few centuries of breeding specifically for aggressiveness—a trait Storm Cat is prized for and seems to be able to pass on to his foals—and you have the potential for some very volatile relationships.

That's the theory. In practice, Storm Cat—apart from his twice-daily acts of sexual congress with the fastest, wealthiest, and most attractive available partners in the world, seven days a week throughout the breeding season—lives like a monk. He eats mostly grass, sleeps on straw, drinks only water. He has no visits with the other stallions. His one diversion is running away from his groom, which he is doing less of lately, because his current groom is kind but strict. He wears only a leather halter. He does not race, he does not train for racing, he does not even exercise. He has given all that up.

Regularly, en route to the breeding shed, he steps on a scale. If the number seems high, he cuts back on the sweet feed that is his sole indulgence. His weight is monitored minutely. When he dropped a few pounds in February, at the beginning of the breeding season, he was rushed to the Hagyard Davidson and McGee Veterinary Clinic, in Lexington. "It wasn't much—enterocolitis," Doc Yocum said. "With any other horse, we probably wouldn't have bothered." He traced its onset to a few instances when Storm Cat arrived at the breeding shed wringing wet before he even started: "My theory is he was just so worked up to get back at the mares."

Storm Cat's stall—where he goes as infrequently as possible, to get his coat brushed, say, or to sleep during inclement weather—is outwardly unremarkable: a foot and a half of straw in a whitewashed cinder-block room with two wooden doors. (Even here, value creates value: Storm Cat's muck is carted off and resold to the Campbell's Soup Company, which uses it as the breeding ground for the mushrooms in its mushroom soup.) But while he sleeps, a box nestled in the ridge of his barn projects an infrared beam that looks for obscurity—smoke. An ultraviolet device picks up flickers of light in the hydrocarbon range—flame. A third mechanism compares ambient temperature against its rate of rise—heat. These three devices monitoring the separate elements of fire are tied into the forty-second alarm system and into a sprinkler system, fed by massive pipes capable of delivering six inches of standing water to the stall in seconds. Fire is a problem because barns are drafty by design and straw is extremely flammable, but Ben Giles, who guides the building projects at the farm, compares Overbrook's safeguards favorably with fire-detection measures in museums. "We don't have the luxury of being able to cut a barn up into small spaces to confine or suppress a fire, because a horse needs air. In that sense, the museums have it a little easier," Giles says. "Plus, their van Goghs are worth a whole lot less than Storm Cat."

It took a long time for people to see that Storm Cat was a lucky horse. As a yearling, he was smallish, longhaired, potbellied, with the kind of turned-out knees that got him booted out of Kentucky's best auction. Twice at the track, he lost races that he should have won, once because he shouldered an inferior horse in the final stretch out of sheer cussedness, and later because his mind wandered when he was too far in front at the Breeders' Cup, a race that would have established him as the leading contender for two-year-old horse of the year. He missed all his Triple Crown races as a three-year-old because he was recovering from knee surgery, and when he tried to come back, late in the year, he trained on dirt that had



"Our hobby is finding old, run-down Victorian houses and levelling them."

turned greasy after a hard rain, and was never the same. When he retired from racing, in 1988, people quickly forgot about him. His stud fee dropped from thirty thousand to twenty-five to twenty, and he couldn't fill his book of mares.

Then his first crop of colts and fillies hit the track. Suddenly, people started remembering what a brilliant, blazingly fast runner he'd been, how he took a competitive streak that bordered on the criminal and used it to overcome his natural unsoundness. By the time his second and third crops hit, people knew that Storm Cats could run. They could run at two years old, or three, or four; colts or fillies, they could run long or short, turf or dirt, in Europe, Japan, or America. By 1994, when Tabasco Cat took the last two jewels of the Triple Crown, it was clear that Storm Cat had a calling.

The mares arrive for their appointments by horse van and walk over a gravel loading dock into the receiving barn—a sort of greenroom for mares in estrus. When a mare enters, somebody pushes a button, a window opens, and Cooperstown, an Overbrook teaser stallion, sticks his head in to try his luck, nuzzling her flank and nosing her haunches. If she kicks, he's the one she kicks at, not Storm Cat. ("If they don't make it at the track, they end up being teasers," Doc Yocum says. "So it's a little incentive deal.") In the past twenty years, veterinarians have grown very precise in pinpointing ovulation (an increase in accuracy that has allowed stallions to double their workload—and farms to double their profits—since fewer and fewer mares require follow-up visits), but final verification is still left to the teaser stallion. If there are any doubts about her receptivity after Cooperstown's initial interview, he is forced to try a jump himself—wearing a leather butcher's apron to insure that the dry run goes unconsummated. Usually, though, she's willing, the window shuts for Coop, and the mare is led into a padded chute to be washed for the breeding shed.

Just before Storm Cat's mare is ready, his groom, Filemon Martinez, a quiet man with a Clark Gable mustache, walks the sire of sires across a covered bridge over Hickman Creek to the stallion barn. From the doorway of the barn, where Storm Cat and Martinez wait like actors in the wings, you can hear the business of breeding: "Easy, boss," and "Go, buddy," and, if it's a stallion with problems in the Valentino department, the pacesetting shouts of "Hyup! Hyup! Hyup!" Most do just fine in the breeding shed, although farm policy seems to be anywhere that works. At least one stallion, Cape Town, prefers to perform al fresco, on the grass, with all the usual team in attendance, plus one guy giving helpful pushes from the rear.

By the time Storm Cat enters the shed, the video camera is rolling (for lawsuits and insurance) and the mare—Rootentootenwooten, in this case—is standing with her head against the wall, wearing padded booties on both hind feet. Storm Cat neighs or hollers or roars—whatever it is, it's frightening and long and full of the inevitable, like the squeal of tires that you know will end in shattering glass. Then he measures himself and rears while the team rushes around him. There are two schools of natural cover: pasture breeding, where horses are let loose in a paddock together, and hand breeding, where a squad of breeding-shed professionals choreograph the proceedings for safety and speed. Overbrook prefers the latter, as practically all large-scale breeding operations do, and their version of it takes at least five people: two to soothe and distract the mare, one to steady the stallion, a tail man, and the stallion manager. When Storm Cat rears, the tail man lifts up the mare's tail, and Wes Lanter, wearing a latex glove, pilots Storm Cat to the place he probably would have found on his own, but not as quickly.

All the majesty of the act is in the roaring, apparently—count to fifteen and it's over. Somebody says "Good cover" with a mixture of appreciation and relief, and Storm Cat, still draped across Rootentootenwooten's back, fits the curl of his neck to hers and allows himself a moment of unstallionlike tenderness before he backs off and puts his feet on the ground again. The stallion manager pulls down a handheld shower nozzle, of the sort you find in French bathtubs, to wash Storm Cat off. Then the groom leads the sire away, through the stallion barn, down the hill, and back into the shadows of the covered bridge. Lanter pulls off his latex glove and says, "He's what everybody hopes happens to them when they retire." ♦

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LIFE AND LETTERS

THE WHIRLWIND

How Kenneth Tynan reinvented theatre criticism—and himself.

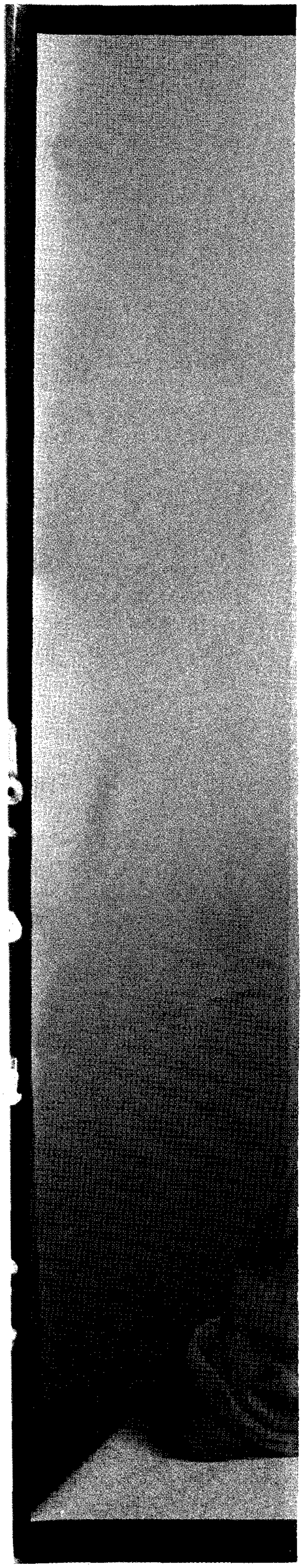
BY JOHN LAHR

At Oxford, where he became a postwar legend, Kenneth Tynan cut a gaunt romantic figure. He liked to characterize himself to the Bright Young Things as a kind of meteor who would blaze across the English scene only to be extinguished before his thirtieth year. "By then," he said, "I will have said everything I have to say." In fact, Tynan's skyrocketing crash-and-burn scenario took nearly twice as long to play itself out. With his reputation for brilliance more or less intact, he died too young, of emphysema, in July, 1980, at the age of fifty-three. At the memorial service, Tom Stoppard turned to Tynan's three children, Tracy, Roxana, and Matthew. "For those of us who were working in the English-speaking theatre during those years," he said, referring to the period between 1950 and 1963, when Tynan's drama criticism was as much an event as the plays he reviewed, "for those of us who shared his time, your father was part of the luck we had."

Critics do not make theatre; they are made by it. Tynan's luck was to be in the right place at the right age with the right credentials, the right vocabulary, and the right impudent temperament to savor the new British theatrical resurgence—certainly the greatest flowering of dramatic talent in England since Elizabeth I. With his hard-won intellectual precocity and his rebellious instincts ("Rouse tempers, goad and lacerate, raise whirlwinds" was the quotation—his own, as it happens—pinned above his writing desk), Tynan was the old Brit and the new rolled into one lanky, well-tailored package. Of the many qualities that made him an outstanding critic—qualities of wit, language, knowledge, style, and fun—perhaps the most important and the most surprising was his profound awareness of death. It fed both his voracity for pleasure—for food, for drink, for sex, for talk ("Talking to gifted and/or funny people," he wrote, is "evidence both of intense curiosity and of jaded palate")—and his desire to memorialize it. "I remember about thirty times between waking and sleeping and always while I'm asleep that I am going to die," he said. "And the more scared I am, the more pleasure and enlightenment I want to squeeze from every moment." For Tynan, writing was a hedge against loss, a way of keeping the consoling dramatic pleasures alive inside himself by making them live for others. "I mummify transience," he announced, at the age of twenty-three, in the epilogue to his first book, "He That Plays the King" (1950), an almost delusional rant, intended as an exercise in what he called "the athletics of personality," with which he launched himself from Oxford into the waiting world.

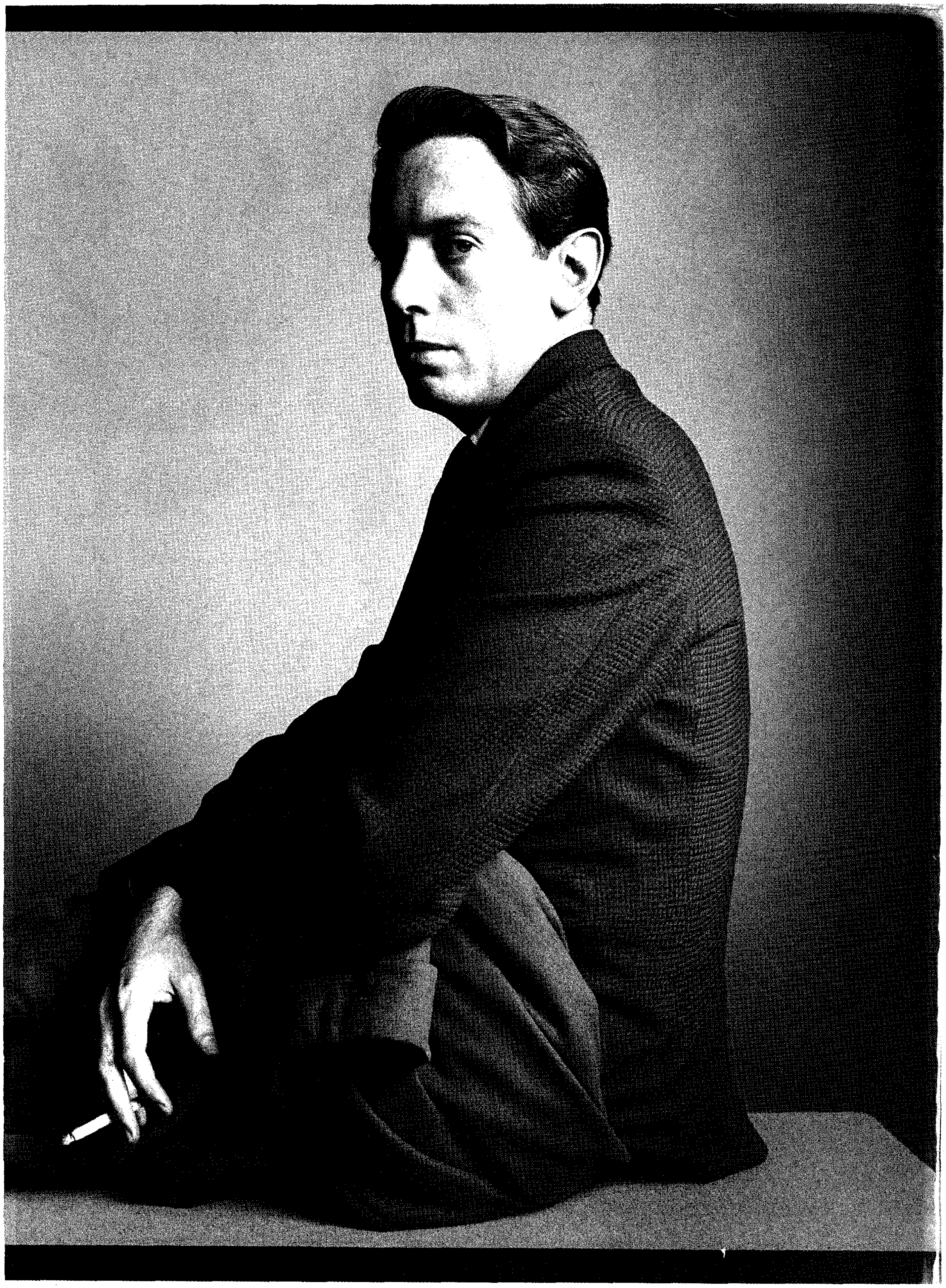
Tynan fancied himself sui generis. He was his own greatest invention, and he loved his maker. When he told his life story, he downplayed his humdrum provincial Midland origins. "In any real sense of the word I was born at Oxford," he said. "I have no more connection with my early life and with Birmingham"—the city where he was born, in 1927—"than I have with Timbuctoo." He wanted glamour, which was not easy to excavate in the threadbare blandness of postwar England. "No cafés. No good restaurants. Clothes were still 'austerity' from the war, dismal and ugly. Everyone was indoors by ten," Doris Lessing wrote—and that was raffish London, not baggy Birmingham.

The deadliness leached into Tynan's childhood, where the unsolid ground of



PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

Portrait of an iconoclast: Tynan was poised, knowledgeable, and spoiling for a fight. Entries from Tynan's previously unpublished journals start on page 48.



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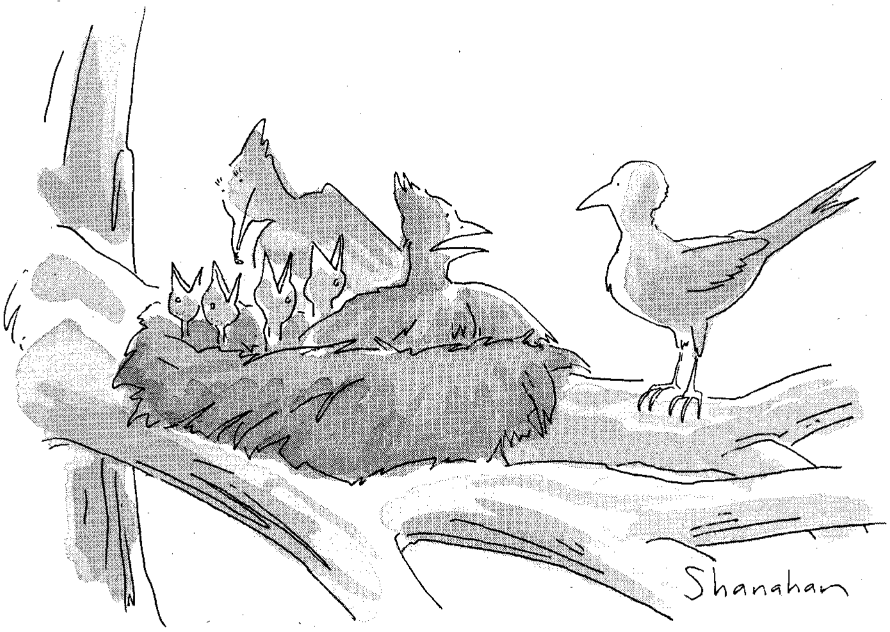


"Working at home has been a mixed blessing."

• •

his family life had a habit of shifting. An older sister had died at birth. His father, the taciturn, successful Sir Peter Peacock, who was fifty-four when Tynan was born, spent two days a week up the road in Warrington, where he was the mayor for six terms, and where, unbeknownst to his son, he kept another family. Peacock had never married Tynan's mother, Rose, a kindly, depressed, modestly educated former laundress, who had aspirations to respectability, and from whose tastes and personality Tynan felt increasingly estranged. In 1958, Rose, unkempt and confused, was picked up by the Yorkshire police carrying a suitcase on which was written, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm going to those who love me." She ended her life in a mental institution. Tynan, however, wasn't the type to feel shame and self-loathing about having abandoned her there. "I could have postponed her death at the expense of my own absorption in self advancement," he wrote. "I chose not to." As a teenager, he turned to the wall the family's déclassé oil paintings of cows in pasture, but his sense of parental detachment was born out of issues deeper than taste. "A cesarean, a bastard and a contemptible object" is how Tynan characterized himself in infancy, in notes he made in 1962, during his psychoanalysis. "A bedwetter, I soiled my mother and she punished me by refusing to feed me."

In the end, like all narcissists, Tynan fed himself. His passion for intellectual distraction fended off what he called "my old meddlesome bugbear, solitude." And although his astonishing intelligence bewildered his parents, they indulged his eclectic enthusiasms. Tynan's mother introduced him to music hall and the "high-definition performance." Together, they travelled to London to see Ivor Novello, the Crazy Gang, Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, Donald Wolfit's hectoring Shakespearean performances. For his ninth Christmas, Tynan asked for and received a hundred books from his parents; on another occasion, they splurged on a monocle for their little showoff, whose large vocabulary was marred by a permanent stutter.

If it was hard for Tynan to be understood at home, he was compelled to make the rest of the world pay proper attention. As a boy, he collected the autographs of such contemporary heroes as Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, and Joseph Kennedy, but he soon became his own star. "As long as I'm not ignored you know quite well I'm perfectly happy," the teen-age Tynan wrote to a friend. At eleven, he appointed a chum at King Edward's School—which he attended on a scholarship—to be his Boswell; at fifteen, he addressed the school literary society on "Art and I" ("a history of the Influences that have Gone to the Making of KPT"); at seventeen, he played Hamlet; at twenty-three, he published his first book of criticism; and by twenty-seven he was the famous, iconoclastic drama critic of the *Observer*. Tynan's life was proof of one of his most famous aphorisms: "A man who strives after an effect not infrequently achieves it."

Tynan's performance of personality—the flamboyant dress (pastel shirts, dove-gray suits, and velvet collars), the mannerisms (cigarette held between the third and fourth finger), and the word horde—embodied the notion of the extraordinary that he'd studied on stage and screen. "Have a new pose: arrogance, bass voice, hanging lower lip. Which reads O-R-S-O-N," he wrote, in a letter to a friend in 1944, just five years before buttonholing the bemused Welles himself to write the preface to his first book. "This sad age needs to be dazzled, shaped and spurred by the spectacle of heroism," Tynan wrote, and certainly he needed it: big magic as an antidote to big hurt. "I was illegitimate and I was made to know it by my father and my family," he later wrote to his first wife, the American writer Elaine Dundy, whom he divorced in 1964, after thirteen tempestuous years of marriage. "I was the boy . . . at whom everyone smiled knowingly and despisingly, and I have pretended ever since to be somebody—anybody—else." Tynan's first published piece of prose, which appeared in the King Edward's School *Chronicle* when he was fourteen, spelled out the credo by which he would more or less live for the rest of his life: "In every community there exists a certain element of the insignificant," he wrote. "The undistinguished person; the person who never argues, never shouts, and whose presence is not immediately noticed. . . . As I watch the useless lives of these people, so foolish, so wasted and so ordinary, I become afraid, and try desperately to forget them."

Tynan arrived at Magdalen College in 1945, and immediately plunged into a whirlwind of public display that included directing, acting, writing, and debating, and only intensified what he called his "superiority complex." "Nothing can ever top the sense of privileged exhilaration I felt then," he said. By his own calculation, his experience at Oxford amounted to seventy-two weeks, three hundred parties, and the equivalent of five full-length volumes of essays. Tynan's tutor was C. S. Lewis, the writer and professor of medieval and Renaissance literature, who taught him how to deploy paradox and how to make his verbal firepower more accurate. "Keep a strict eye on eulogistic & dyslogistic adjectives—They shd *diagnose* (not merely blame) & distinguish (not merely praise)," Lewis wrote on a Tynan essay about early English drama. Tynan learned his lessons well. A stripling aesthete, he prophesied, "My collected works will bulk small but precious." (His subsequent dashing and incomparable œuvre is currently out of print on both sides of the Atlantic.)

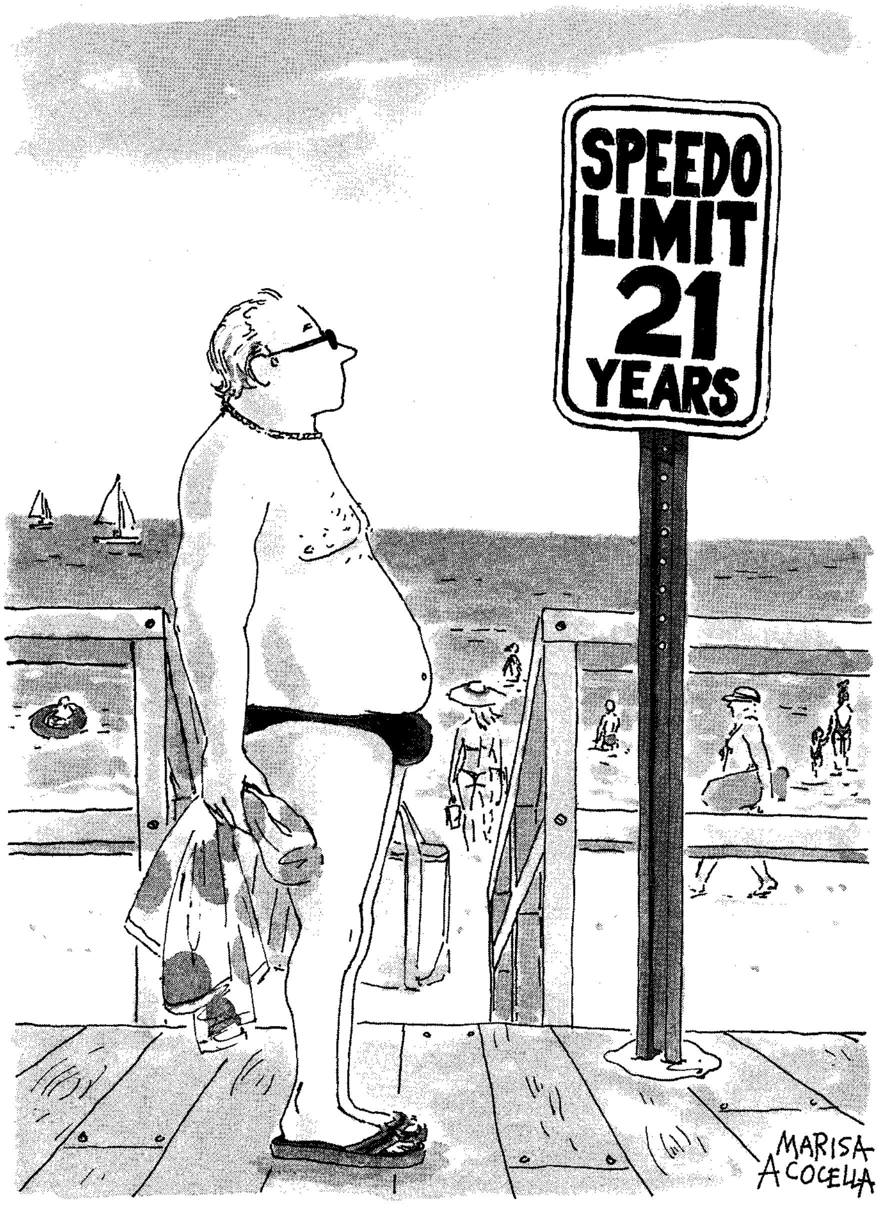
By the end of his three years at Oxford, he was already attacking members of the British critical fraternity and their impoverished sensibilities. "A sham necklace of bitter brevities or false, hollow eulogy will not do for criticism," he brayed, in the first chapter of "He That Plays the King." "The fixed quizzical grin, the bar-fly impressionism, the epicene tartness which most critics affect is no substitute for awe, hate, and rapture." He went on, "What I am saying is that attack, not apology, passion, not sympathy, should lie behind the decorous columns of our drama critics." Criticism, he added, "calls for great flexibility of reaction and above all, great flair and cocksureness." What Tynan was really proposing as the Rx for the parlous state of dramatic criticism was himself.

As a critic, Tynan emerged on the English scene almost fully formed. He was poised; he was knowledgeable. He was also—and always—spoiling for a fight. He inherited a moribund theatrical scene, where, as he wrote, "two out of three London theatres were inhabited by detective stories, Pineroesque melodramas, quarter-witted farces, débutante comedies, overweight musicals and unreviewable revues." He wrote as a man of the theatre, not as a man of the reading room, and his style blasted prolix Victorian waffle from critical discourse. Here, for instance, writing on Shakespeare's "Henry IV" in 1946, is James Agate, the leading theatre critic of his day, whose style Tynan mocked for its "breathless punch-drunk downrightness":

> "England," announces the program. And who is to set the first half of this great play in its country and period. Not, one thinks, the wan and shaken King, nor yet his priggish, pragmatical son; and surely the Percys and the Mortimers, Douglases and Glendowers have long been piffle before the wind of time.

Instead of the highfalutin, Tynan developed an artful, pungent, sly tone, which might be called "lowfalutin." His pomp had a knockdown wink in it. Of Rodgers and Hammerstein's excursion into contemporary Chinese culture in "Flower Drum Song," Tynan wrote, "Perhaps as a riposte to Joshua Logan's 'The World of Suzy Wong,' Rodgers and Hammerstein have given us what, if I had any self control at all, I would refrain from describing as a world of woozy song."

In print, Tynan's wit and limpid style presented him to the world as a specimen of perfect individualism without wound or worry. "I know nothing of ardour and am not dogged: to write, for me, is not *necessary* as gunpowder *needs* to explode," he wrote in "He That Plays the King." "I do this because I can, not because I have to." Tynan protested too much. He did have a need, and that was to align himself, in a kind of symbiotic way, with the extraordinary souls whose work onstage he tried to match with his own literary performance. "The study

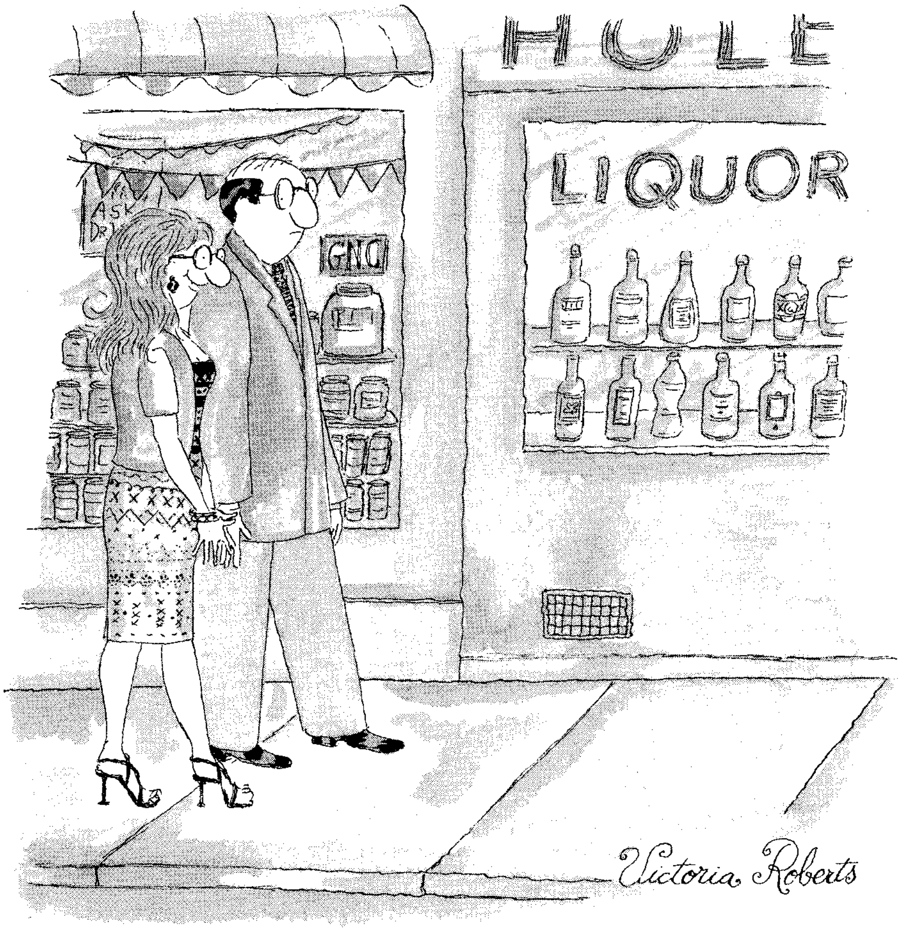


of actors should be a full-time task," he wrote, "worthy of the same passionate scholarship which lepidopterists devote to butterflies." His stunning evocations of performers worked a kind of sympathetic magic that bound their glory inextricably to him. Fame, and the celebrated company he kept, gave him legitimacy.

Tynan had a language beyond the usual lit-crit stammer, and it conveyed the subtlety of a craft that was undergoing profound sociological changes. The 1945 Education Act had enabled many talented young people, including Tynan, to get scholarships to universities and acting schools that before the war had been the privilege of the rich. This created a dynamic new pool of working-class talent—actors like Rita Tushingham, Peter O'Toole, Tom Courtenay, Albert Finney, and Richard Burton, who came to the stage with different energies, different behaviors, different connections to British experience, and who in a short time would require a different kind of play. Tynan was on their wavelength. And because he understood glamour and the discipline of planting the idea of self in the public mind and keeping it there, these stars, and others, found themselves deconstructed by him with unusual finesse. "To be famous young and to make fame last—the secret of combining the two is glandular: it depends on energy," Tynan wrote with particular prescience, in an account of Noël Coward's famous night-club début at the Café de Paris.

Tynan was never shy about shivering the timbers of the English acting establishment. On Vivien Leigh's Cleopatra, for instance: "Taking a deep breath and resolutely focusing her periwinkle charm, she launches another of her careful readings; ably and passionlessly she picks her way among its great challenges, presenting a glibly mown lawn where her author had imagined a jungle." Still, Tynan, who aspired to be a spellbinder, was at his most compelling when he was under the spell of others: Marlene Dietrich "shows herself to the audience like the Host to the congregation and delivers the sacred goods"; Katharine Hepburn is "wide open yet with no breaches in her armour"; Judy Garland, at the Palace, "embodies the persistence of youth so completely that we forbid her to develop. . . . Even in young middle age, she must continue to sing about adolescence and all the pain and nostalgia that go with it. When the voice pours out, as rich and pleading as ever, we know where, and how moved, we are—in the presence of a star, and embarrassed by tears."

Tynan never succumbed to what he called "the critic's scourge: atrophy of love." He was passionate, nowhere more so than in his review of John Osborne's "Look Back in Anger" (1956). "I doubt if I could love anyone who did not wish to see 'Look Back in Anger.' It is the best young play of its decade," he wrote. But theatre is a recalcitrant beast; even with Tynan's prodding, it didn't move quickly in the direction he wanted. At the end of the fifties, he concluded that English theatre was "desperately enfeebled" and that "the strongest and most unmistakable influence on our drama in the last ten years has been transatlantic." In 1958, Tynan took himself off for an infusion of American energy, and was the senior drama critic of this magazine for two years. But, as the sixties wore on, he found himself with less to say about Britain's writers (Pinter, Orton, Bond) and more to say about the establishment of a National Theatre, where the sprouts of their theatrical renaissance could be properly nurtured.



"I love that your politics stink."

In 1962, having just attacked the newly appointed head of the National Theatre, Sir Laurence Olivier, for his season of plays at the Chichester Festival Theatre, Tynan wrote to Olivier asking to be made the National Theatre's first dramaturge. "How shall we slaughter the little bastard?" Olivier fumed to his wife, the actress Joan Plowright, who nonetheless liked the idea, because young audiences would be "thrilled with the mixture of you and Ken." In a letter inviting Tynan to work as an in-house critic and to help plan the seasons, as well as take charge of all published material, a position Tynan held from 1963 to 1973, Olivier added a postscript: "GOD—ANYthing to get you off that *Observer*."

The job increased both Tynan's public prestige and his private frustration. Of the seventy-nine plays mounted on his watch, according to his second wife, Kathleen Tynan, "thirty-two of these productions were Ken's ideas; twenty were chosen with his collaboration." This kind of defensive scorekeeping is typical of the dramaturge's dilemma; the successes or failures of the theatre may be of his choosing but not of his accomplishing. Neither odium nor glory falls, finally, to him: both inside and outside the theatre, the critic's role, Tynan knew, was one without risk. "I took the safer course and became a full-time critic," he wrote in his journal. "That is why, today, I am everybody's adviser—Roman Polanski's, Larry Olivier's, Michael White's—and no one's boss, not even my own."

"Such is servility," he wrote in 1972, when Olivier had gone behind his back to ask the director Peter Hall his opinion of a play that Tynan had suggested. And when Olivier accepted Hall as his successor, rather than nominating one of his colleagues at the National, Tynan wrote, "He has passed a vote of no confidence in us all. . . . He has hired us, stolen our kudos, and now shows no compunction about discarding us." The National kept Tynan busy but did not allow him to accomplish his mission. In the theatre's tenth-anniversary year, Tynan noted in his journal that it had "discovered one new playwright (Tom Stoppard) and no new directors." He added, "It's a sad reflection on the way in which I've occupied my time for the past decade."

"This is where things started getting really weird."

Over the next seven years, Tynan's sense of regret and self-loathing grew. He heard himself described as the greatest English theatre critic since George Bernard Shaw, but, unlike Shaw, he had no other forum in which to express himself. Renown requires deeds, and where were Tynan's? He tried and failed to float the idea of himself as a stage and film director. He could manage the sprint of a newspaper column but not the long-distance run of a sustained piece of work. None of the books for which he took advances got written. (He got halfway through a study of Wilhelm Reich but dropped it.) The routine of reviewing had palled, and the anomie it had once kept at bay now filtered deeper into his life: "The sensation of vanishing. Nothing registers on me: I register nothing." He seemed unable to claim new, meaningful territory for himself. There were always causes to debate and to keep him in the middle of things: Vietnam, sexual liberation, censorship (he was the first person to break the BBC sound barrier by saying "fuck"). He produced two West End shows, which failed, and a sex revue, "Oh! Calcutta!," one of the top three longest-running musicals of all time. But, as his journal shows, Tynan's self-lacerating spirit was increasingly channelled into sadomasochistic sexual obsessions (he had an appetite for spanking and whipping). More and more, he smiled at the world with cold teeth.

At the beginning of Tynan's career, when he was still inventing himself in "He That Plays the King," he turned his emptiness into a kind of heroic self-advertisement, depicting himself variously as a "soft blotting-pad," a "shell," a "spying-glass," a "chameleon," an "echo." As a critic, he hitched that emptiness to stars and to productions whose energy he absorbed and reflected back. Over time, though, the increasing momentum of his fame led to a sort of disintegration. His emphysema compounded a lassitude that he could neither control nor quite understand. "I used to take Dexamyl to give me enough confidence to start work," he wrote in 1971. "Now I take it to give me enough confidence not to." The frequent high spirits in Tynan's sad tale make his journal all the more poignant. "Was Elaine a trial?" the critic Cyril Connolly asks him about his first wife. "No. More of a jury," Tynan answers.

On his deathbed, he whispered the words "a small talent for brilliance." If he was speaking of himself, his judgment is too harsh. The journal he left behind bears witness to his own advice: "Be light, stinging, insolent, and melancholy." It demonstrates both his brilliance and his struggle to find a place in the world for his intelligence to shine. Unwittingly, in its accounts of Tynan's restless and wayward sexual exploits, it also tracks a larger human theme, which "Oh! Calcutta!" tried and failed to dramatize—what one of Tynan's famous friends, Tennessee Williams, once called the "mad pilgrimage of the flesh." ♦

THE JOURNALS OF KENNETH TYNAN

Entries from the unpublished private journals of a man with passions.

January 15, 1971: What enables one to exercise talent is the ability to impose oneself (*s'imposer*). Roman [Polanski], Larry [Olivier], [Orson] Welles, [Marlon] Brando, [Harold] Pinter can *s'imposer*. Definition of an imposer: one about whom one worries whether his response to one's next remark will be a smile or a snarl. With imposers there is always danger, even if one isn't employed by them. (E.g., Hemingway.)

March 8: On closed circuit TV at 5 a.m. K[athleen Tynan] and I see the defeat of Muhammad Ali. Belated epitaph of the 60's: flair, audacity, imagination, outrageous aplomb, cut down by stubborn, obdurate, "hard-hat" persistence. We may come to look back on the 60's as the Indian summer of the Western imagination, of the last aristocrats of Western taste. Beginning with Kennedy, the era ends with Nixon and Joe Frazier, his hatchet-man. In Clay's towering vulnerability, his apparent unconcern about exposing himself to punishment, there is breathtaking hubris, as well as the death wish remarked on by more than one commentator. He reminds one of a beautiful butch queer savoring the ecstacy of being beaten up and robbed by a bit of rough trade from the docks. Cavaliers had better beware. The Roundheads are back in force.

March 19: Deadlock at rehearsals of the N[ational] T[heatre's] "Coriolanus," which started on Monday, with Christopher Plummer in the lead and Joachim Tenschert and Manfred Wekwerth of the Berliner Ensemble directing. Plummer broke off rehearsals on Thursday to insist that twenty substantial cuts in his part should be restored and that new costumes should be designed for him. He also indicated disapproval of the interpretation—though it was he who chose Tenschert and Wekwerth from a list of possible directors we submitted to him. They patiently agreed to the textual restorations (most of which were justified) but pointed out that they could

COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH TYNAN (2)

Tynan at his house in Thurloe Square in London in the seventies. He wrote regularly in a journal from 1970 until his death in 1980, recording his views on show business, literature, politics, marriage, and his own obsession with sadomasochistic sex.

hardly jettison their interpretation of the play, since they had worked on it for years with Brecht and embodied it in one of the Ensemble's most brilliant productions.

Today Plummer arrives at rehearsal and . . . refuses to take direction, insists on doing it his way, and makes jokes about T. and W. in front of the company. Whereupon T. and W. call off the rehearsal and retire to their hotel until such time as Christopher will apologize to them. All this, of course, is a reenactment of "Coriolanus": Plummer versus the two people's tribunes, too proud to bow the head and atone for his insults. He is crassly in the wrong, of course, but I fear in this case it will be the tribunes, and not Coriolanus, who are banished.

March 20: My "Coriolanus" prediction is happily wrong. After a night of telephoning from John Dexter, Michael Blakemore, and myself, Larry sees the point that we must not bend to the whim of visiting stars. His first impulse was to take the actor's side, fire the Germans and ask Michael to take over the production—appealing to the latter's loyalty. I pointed out to Michael that the captain who scuttles the ship has no right to invite loyalty when asking one to bail out the bilgewater. Faced with a choice between the values of two ex-leaders of the Berliner Ensemble and the values of the star of "The Sound of Music," which do we choose? After 48 hours of worry, much of it sleepless, on all our parts, Larry calls a company meeting to hear how the actors feel. To a man, they express loyalty to the Germans—a gratifying and (for me) unexpected result. Larry then breaks the news to a dumbfounded Plummer that he has been voted out of the consulship. Anthony Hopkins will take over the part. The whole episode a splendid vindication of the new collective leadership at the N.T.

April 4: I must record here a story Marlene Dietrich told me several years ago. She was a friend, in the 30's, of Joseph P. Kennedy, and her daughter swam with his boys on the Riviera before the war. In the autumn of 1962 she was appearing in cabaret in Washington. Bobby and Teddy came to see her, but of course the President does not attend nightclubs; and she was sad about this until she received a summons to have drinks at the White House the following Saturday at 6 p.m. She accepted, although at 7 p.m. she had to be at the Statler Hotel, where the Jewish War Veterans were holding a dinner to honor her for her wartime work to aid Jewish refugees. So at 6 she arrived at the White House and was shown by a press attaché into the President's sanctum. A bottle of German wine was cooling in an ice bucket: "The President remembered that when he last dined with you in New York you said this was your favorite wine." The attaché poured her a glass and withdrew. The clock reached 6:15 before J.F.K. loped in, kissed her, poured himself some wine, took her out on the balcony and talked about Lincoln. "I hope you aren't in a hurry," he said. Marlene explained that,

Tynan married Kathleen Halton, at left, in June, 1967. Marlene Dietrich was the matron of honor. Friends in attendance after the ceremony included Robert Silvers, editor of The New York Review of Books, and the New Yorker writer Penelope Gilliatt.

alas, 2,000 Jews were waiting to give her a plaque at 7 p.m., and it was now 6:30 . . . "That doesn't give us much time, does it?" said J.F.K., looking straight into her eyes. Marlene confesses that she likes powerful men and enjoys hanging their scalps on her belt. So she looked straight back and said: "No, Jack, I guess it doesn't." With that, he took her glass and led the way out into a corridor and then round a corner into—the presidential bedroom. And then, in M.D.'s words: "I remembered about his bad back—that wartime injury. I looked at him and he was already undressing. He was unwinding rolls of bandage from around his middle—he looked like Laocoön and that snake, you know? Now, I'm an old lady, and I said to myself: I'd like to sleep with the President, sure, but I'll be goddammed if I'm going to be on top!"

But it seems everything was OK; J.F.K. took the superior position; and it was all over sweetly and very soon. "And then he went to sleep. I looked at my watch and it was 6:50. I got dressed and shook him—because I didn't know my way around the place, and I couldn't just call for a cab. I said: 'Jack—wake up! 2,000 Jews are waiting! For Christ's sake get me out of here!' So he grabbed a towel and wrapped it round his waist and took me along this corridor to an elevator. He told the elevator man to get me a car to the Statler immediately—standing right there in his towel, without any embarrassment, as if it was an everyday event—which in his life it probably was. Just as I was getting into the elevator, he said: 'There's just one thing I'd like to know.' 'What is it, Jack?' I said. 'Did you ever make it with my father?' he asked. 'No, Jack,' I answered truthfully, 'I never did.' 'Well,' he said, 'that's one place I'm in first.' Then the lift door closed and I never saw him again."

April 16: In Paris, at the Olympia: Jerry Lewis opens to a *tout*-Paris audience including Aznavour, Bardot, etc. His finesse, his daintiness, his delicate mimetic skill are riveting: cleverly adapting his act so that it avoids language (he speaks no French) and focuses on mime, song, gesture, dance and miming to music, he shows a command of vaudeville techniques such as I may never see again and such as this audience has probably never seen before. Miming to a 30's big-band record, he transforms its snarling riffs and growling trumpets into a bar-room brawl—*brilliant!*

May 3: Adrian Mitchell's marvellous bawdy celebration of William Blake's "Tyger" is scheduled to open in July. Larry expressed early on his horrified qualms about four-letter words, scatology and randy references in the text; but he has postponed issuing an ultimatum on the subject until now, when the production has been announced and advertised. He is counting on the directors (John Dexter and Michael Blakemore) and the author being willing to compromise rather than have a public row. Further, he says he must get Lord Chandos' [chairman of the board of the National Theatre] approval of the text. This incites me to explosion. First he has no need to obtain anyone's approval; I spent 2 years on an Arts Council inquiry which unanimously asserted the right of the artistic director—not the board—to have the final say on choice of plays in subsidized theatres.

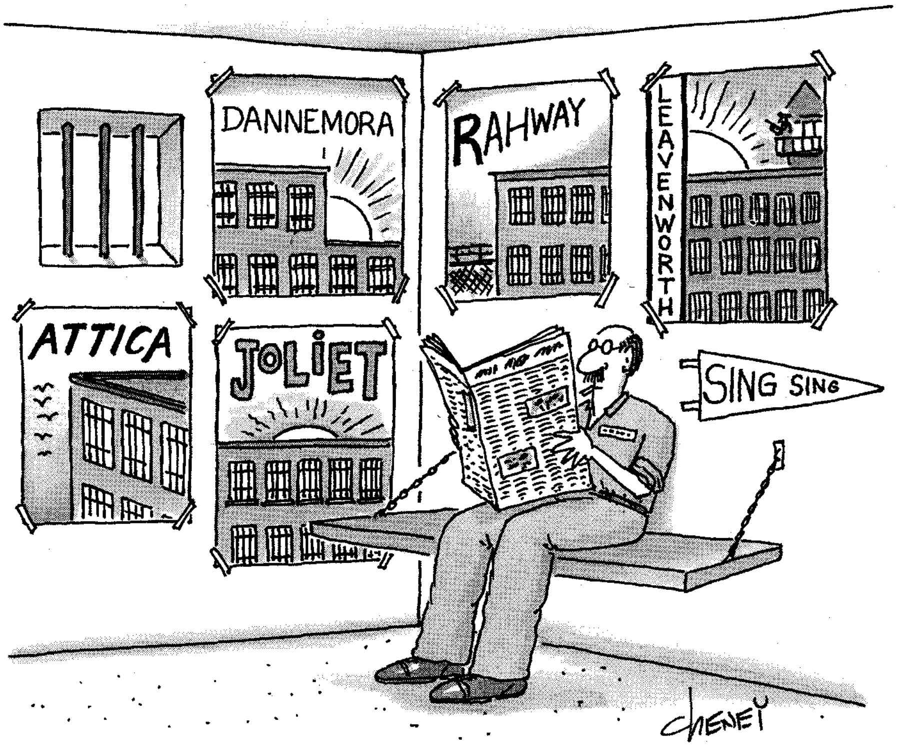
May 11: First musical read-through of "Tyger": the whole cast stunned and exhilarated. Tonight Larry calls Adrian to find if he will agree to the cuts: I almost hope Larry withdraws the play so that I can do it with Michael White and astound London and New York. I weep shamelessly at Mike Westbrook's setting of Adrian's lovely song "The Children of William Blake" (I must have this recorded for K.'s parturition next month). And the Vic rehearsal room rocks to the hymn-like rhythms of the first act finale, "Every thing that lives is holy," a simple descending phrase repeated by the whole cast hundreds of times while Gerald James (as Blake) cries prophecies of victory over squalor and repression at the audience. It is overwhelming and the show must be a triumph. Partly mine, since I commissioned it.

June 9: At 3:30 p.m., a son—7 lb. 3 1/2 oz.—to be called Matthew (after K.'s father) Blake (after William Blake and James Blake, the American convict author) Tynan. I had thought I could sire only girls and rather wanted a third. She would have been exquisitely named Anjelica Tiffany Tynan and when the nurse told me the child was a boy, I spoke aloud a short farewell to Anjelica Tiffany, who had emerged briefly from the shadows and now receded into them. What I feared was a husky thug of a boy: I do not like male competition—in fact I am not all that crazy about men per se—so I was much relieved to find that Matthew is sensitive, almost girlish-looking—resembles Roxana when she was born. So long as he develops my feminine streak he will be very welcome. I shall shortly buy him a few pretty frocks and enter him for Sadler's Wells ballet school. K. is positively glowing with earth-motherliness.

July 13: First public preview of "Tyger"—not well received: the direction hasn't released the spontaneous, audience-embracing warmth that is in the show. And of course there were technical gaffes of all kinds which can be put right. I see Larry looking fogged and harassed and uncomprehending. . . . Next day Larry and I meet Dexter and Blakemore to exchange notes. L. says he asked Binkie Beaumont (member of the board) to see the performance last night and quotes Binkie as saying that the show is subversive and seditious and that public money should not be spent on such things. L. begs for deletion of line: "God damn the Queen." I am deputed to ask Adrian to consent to cuts.

July 16: Fourth preview of "Tyger": already a tenfold improvement: solidarity between actors, musicians and audience is tangible in the theatre. But before the show an extraordinary scene . . . with Larry, John Dexter, Michael Blakemore and myself. L.O. insists that "God damn the Queen" be deleted. Adrian has refused. . . . I explain that Adrian really has republican sympathies, as do I: "Why don't you go and live in a republic then?" says L.O.

July 19: Joan Plowright has been sent by Larry to tell John Dexter, Michael Blakemore and myself that the Queen-bothering line must be cut or the show will not go on.



July 25: Worst fears realized—"Tyger" receives—from the middle-aged critics—the most venomous reviews I can remember. After a first night weakly played in the later stages, the press split down the middle on generation-gap lines: the pity, from our point of view, being that the overwhelming majority of the critics are over 40. This is unhealthy for the theatre, because it means that standards are being set by men who have mostly settled in their own careers for second-best, for compromise, for values acceptable to their editors and their readers. Nobody among the newspaper critics has a radical vision of life and theatre—and I don't mean just politically radical: I use the word in a far more general sense, meaning a free, open, unconstrained, unblinkered, exuberant, back-to-grass-roots view of human possibilities.

Aug. 3: Disgraceful production of "Danton's Death" . . . by Jonathan Miller. Mumbled and inaudible; the mob scenes inexcusably excised; Danton—guillotined in his mid-30's—played by Christopher Plummer as a mannered eccentric in late middle age, rather like Benjamin Franklin; Robespierre (Charles Kay) the traditional thin-lipped villain of Hollywood epics; 19th Century songs wantonly added; the central and crucial scene in prison with Tom Paine omitted altogether; the set consisting of headless waxworks in boxes, underlining the fairly obvious point that the play has to do with decapitations. I cannot exaggerate my rage at this mixture of arid intellectualizing and naive over-simplification. There had been talk earlier in the day of asking Jonathan M. to direct "The Bacchae" for the N.T. It would be like giving a bomb to a member of the Bomb Disposal Squad.

"Four flops in a row," Larry murmurs to me during the rehearsal of "Danton's Death." "Now they'll have to ask me to go." He is only half kidding. Larry's torpid fatalism is exactly like Danton's: he ruminates and reminisces as the hatchetmen gather in the shadows. And always, at the back of his mind, is the unspoken thought which Danton actually utters: "They'll never dare."

Aug. 4: The reviews—with only a couple of exceptions—are uniformly good. High praise to Jonathan for his brilliantly analytical production, to the actors for their exquisite control. Larry calls me up in bewilderment. "I don't know what to think any longer," he says. . . . Perhaps we should both resign.

Aug. 17: Reading Hemingway's "Across the River and Into the Trees" for the first time: I conclude that he forged a style perfectly designed to express the ideas of the under-privileged and later found himself drifting into a frame of mind that compelled him to use the same style to express the ideas of the authoritarian and sophisticated. And it did not fit.

When I knew Hemingway he drank steadily and strongly, but I had not realized what his standards were until I analyzed the alcoholic intake of Colonel Cantwell and his teen-aged beloved, Renata, during their first evening together in "Across the River." Before meeting Renata, the Colonel drinks three double dry martinis with the headwaiter and has a double gin and Campari in his bedroom. In Harry's Bar he and his girl share eight double "Montgomerys" (dry martinis at a ratio of 15 to one, this being the ratio of superiority at which, according to Hemingway, Field-Marshal Montgomery preferred to do battle). Over dinner at the Gritti the couple drink one bottle of Capri Bianco, one of Valpolicella and two of Roederer Brut '42. Later in a gondola they down a bottle of Perrier-Jouet. Total: Seven double martinis and one double gin for the Colonel, four double martinis for the girl, plus five shared bottles of wine. Finally, the Colonel retires to his room and empties another bottle of Valpolicella.

Sentence that wins, outright, the Unsupported Hemingway Generalization Prize: "You do not say that you buy sausages for a dog in Italy."

Sept. 28: T. E. Lawrence's R.A.F. record, auctioned yesterday, has the following entry: "Identification marks: scar both buttocks." This confirms the story of one of Lawrence's service friends that he regularly beat him. Odd how upper-class British life between the wars was full of steely, dapper men with blazing eyes who took tea in ducal conservatories and then retired to furnished rooms to take down their trousers and be whipped. I met some of them in Oxford after the war, mostly minor gentry, many of them slightly sinister, planning to buy and operate public schools for boys (an easy thing to do then, because inspection of such schools

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"Would you like to have a drink with me after the genocide panel?"

was cursory and infrequent) of which the main function would be to act as laboratories for experiments with the cane.

January 19, 1972: A Freudian spoonerism, uttered by me to Kathleen yesterday: "Did you remember to close the deadroom bore?"

April 10: Dining at the Cheval Rouge in Montoire with the Pierre Salingers, I am called from London by Rozina [Tynan's assistant]. She says that yesterday's "Observer" and today's "Guardian" contain hard announcements that Peter Hall has been signed to replace Larry at the National. I call Larry, whose story is that two weeks ago he was summoned by Sir Max Rayne, the property tycoon who has been chairman of the N.T. since last summer, and told that the board had decided on Peter Hall. He told Larry to keep his mouth shut, and that was that. L.O. swears that this was the first he knew about the approach to P.H. and that he was given no chance to suggest alternatives. Clearly he should not have agreed to the vow of silence: he ought to have insisted on discussing the appointment with his colleagues—me, John Dexter and Michael Blakemore—the latter especially, since he is the logical successor to L.O., not the burnt-out conservative P.H.

July 5: In my office at the N.T. the house phone rings and it's Peter Hall popping in for a friendly but fairly definitive chat. He pays extravagant but (I think) sincere tribute to my part in creating the N.T. and adds (not "but" adds—he is too much the diplomat even to imply "but") that he hopes I don't envisage that I'm to be thrown out. Nevertheless, he's not entirely sure (and wants my views on) whether we shall get on, both being so good at politicking, both with such strong ideas. I disabuse him of the thought that I ever intended (even under Michael Blakemore) to stay on after the move to the new building, when I would like to be phased out. I sense he is privately relieved, though not surprised. . . .

I feel, of course, a slight pang now that all has been said and the end of the chapter settled. It *would* be exciting to plan a new N.T. with a new policy. . . . But enough of this vicarious living. I must go back to taking responsibility for what I do, which is *write.*

July 20: I am certain that the full potential of the cinema will not be achieved until it concentrates on the development of *full-length cartoons.* (I've suspected this since I saw the brilliant and highly erotic Japanese cartoon, "1001 Nights," two years ago.) I do not, by this, mean stylized drawings of talking animals; nor would anyone imagine anything so absurd were it not for the fact that Walt Disney's accidental domination of the cartoon scene has made it impossible for us to think of it except in terms of clothed, speaking animals and birds going through motions designed to entertain the nursery. It's significant that the first X-rated or "adult" cartoon, "Fritz the Cat," has pigs, crows and cats in its cast but no people. It is as if the first oil painter had painted only trees, and the art of painting had subsequently been defined as the art of painting trees.

What the cinema ought to be doing (and to have done) is to present colored *images* of reality (or fantasy) designed by *artists.* At present—by using the camera merely to photograph *reality*—it is confining itself to a function that is part newsreel and part photographed theatre. In pure cinema there would be no real actors and no real backgrounds; there would be drawn (or painted) settings. Only thus will cinema achieve its historic mission of rising above and eventually replacing the novel.

I note that several critics refer to sexual situations in "Fritz the Cat" that would never be tolerated by the censor in "real-life." Exactly: art laughs at censorious locksmiths. And the erotic possibilities of pure cinema are infinitely greater than those of "filmed reality."

Why have the movies never exploited this obvious line of development? Partly because of Disney's power (already mentioned) but partly, too, because of his weakness. Because he failed, in "Snow White," to draw a credibly human hero and heroine, it was assumed that no one else could succeed.

I must do something with this insight before a thousand others beat me to it. How?

Oct. 9: Psychoanalysis, so far from dissolving the guilt attached to sexual fetishes, has in fact intensified it. To the Victorian an interest in spanking was an eccentricity; to the Freudian it is evidence of a pre-genital fixation: it is an offense against the sacrosanct ideal of the Exclusively Genital Orgasm. Freud hypothesized an ideal sexual act, from which all deviations were heresies to be purified by confession and rooted out in the annealing fires of analysis. To the Victorian only sodomitic deviations (in men or women), incest and bestiality were considered unnatural: to the Freudian it is not merely eccentric, it is against nature for the prick to stiffen at the sight of a corset or the sight of a pair of knickers. In other words, the new orthodoxy finds many more things anathema than the old.

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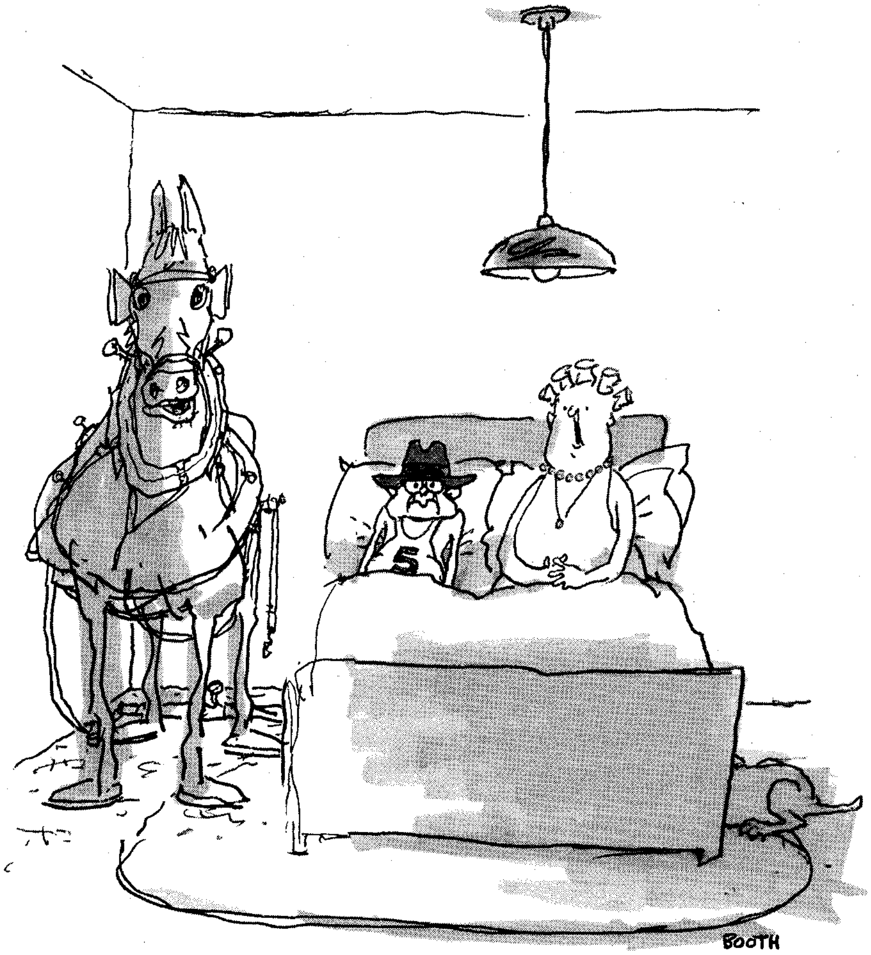
Which 20th Century artists were beyond criticism—i.e. accepted by *everyone* as masters to question whose status would be blasphemous? Not Joyce (it's OK to dislike Finnegan); not Stravinsky (OK to find the latter works arid); not Picasso (John Berger's book); not Eisenstein (OK to hold his work distorted by Stalinism); not Chaplin (OK to prefer Keaton); not Brecht (OK to hold his work corrupted by dogmatic Marxism); not Shaw (OK to find him shallow); not Hemingway (infantile aggressions); etc. etc. The only exceptions I can think of are: Chekhov and Proust—and it's stretching a point to call Chekhov a 20th Century figure. (Footnote: to this list Mary McCarthy—on Dec. 10—suggests an addition: Kafka.)

Nov. 17: Byron, Wilde and Shakespeare would be the three English writers I'd most like to invite to dinner. Odd how 19th Century literature is sealed off at both ends by an anal scandal—Wilde up Bosie's bum, Byron up Annabella's.

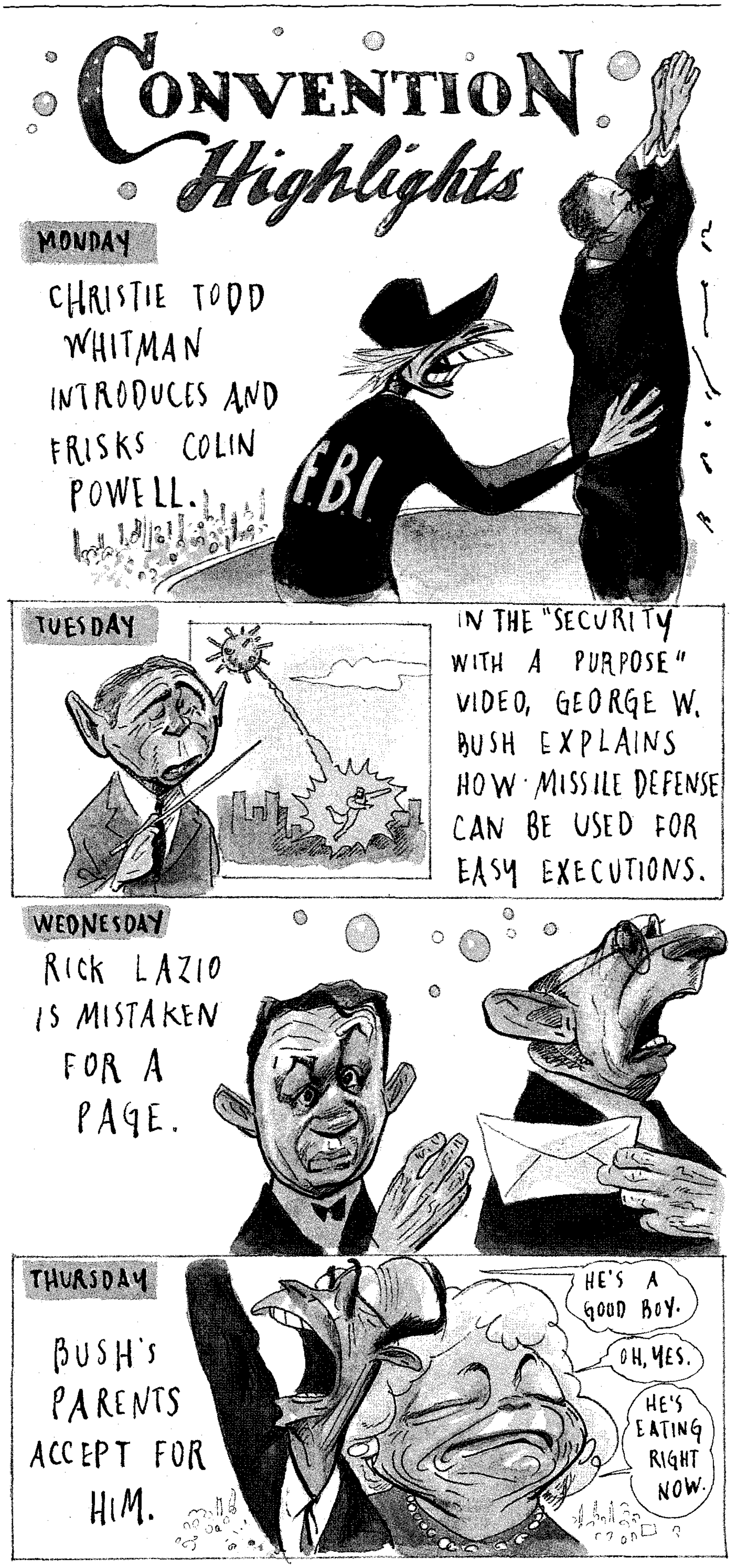
Dec. 8: An annual Christmas trip to Paris ruined by a bronchial attack. What is emphysema like when a bug strikes? The lungs burn and scald when coughing starts; breathing is like painfully clenching and unclenching two vast stiff fists—the lungs. Or you might say that it's as if glue were pasting the inside of the lungs together, so that the air that is forced in must prise them open. Tonight—dining at the Tour d'Argent—I am close to fainting and collapse into bed at the hotel, unable to move. I feel really fatal, though Kathleen cheers me by recalling what [the painter] Dominic Elwes said when a nasty colonic ailment menaced him last year: "It isn't time yet to say hello to Father Greensward." Dominic's reaction to serious illness was outrage at its effrontery: "It's absurd! Jesus Christ, I'm Peter Pan!"

January 5, 1973: If our (the N.T.'s) planned production of "The Bacchae," adapted by Wole Soyinka and directed by Roland Joffé, is postponed—as it may be, due to various internal stresses in the organization—the N.T. will by next October have been in existence for ten years during which it will have discovered one new playwright (Tom Stoppard) and no new directors. I mention this statistic to Larry, who is visibly shaken . . . but finally admits that I'm right. It's a sad reflexion on the way in which I've occupied my time for the past decade.

Feb. 20: Since last November I have been seeing (and spanking) a fellow spanking addict, a girl called [Nicole, a pseudonym]. Her fantasy—dormant until I met her—is precisely to be bent over with knickers taken down to be spanked, caned or otherwise punished, preferably with the buttocks parted to disclose the anus. She also enjoys exposing and spanking me. Meeting only for intensive and exhausting sexual purposes, we have delighted each other for months. Our fantasies exactly match: whereas I am conscious that Kathleen has had to will herself to fit into my fantasy. But for all these months my sex life with K. has languished, to her increasing distress. Two days ago, forced by real anguish on her part (blaming herself for my lack of physical interest), I told her about [N.]—explaining, a trifle disingenuously, that there was no competition between the two of them; that [N.] represented the curry side of my life, whereas K. represented French cooking; that I needed both, perhaps even at the same time (threesome situations are especially attractive to sado-masochists, who like an audience since they like humilia-



"When we agreed that you would move in, Mr. Goodrich, you didn't mention Rex."


CONVENTION Highlights
MONDAY
CHRISTIE TODD WHITMAN INTRODUCES AND FRISKS COLIN POWELL.
F.B.I.
TUESDAY
IN THE "SECURITY WITH A PURPOSE" VIDEO, GEORGE W. BUSH EXPLAINS HOW MISSILE DEFENSE CAN BE USED FOR EASY EXECUTIONS.
WEDNESDAY
RICK LAZIO IS MISTAKEN FOR A PAGE.
THURSDAY
BUSH'S PARENTS ACCEPT FOR HIM.
HE'S A GOOD BOY.
OH, YES.
HE'S EATING RIGHT NOW.

tion); that it was only the guilt of concealment that had kept me from fucking her.

—

Recent experiences prove once again that physical pain is not a source of pleasure even to the masochist. The apprehension, the preparation, the threat, the exposure, the humiliation—*these* are thrilling, and so is the warmth afterwards, and the sight of the marks; but the impact of cane on bottom is no fun at all. (There used to be an ointment on sale that deadened the skin: it was a boon to masochists.) Thus Reich is right when he declares that masochism is not—as Freud claimed—a form of death wish in that it seeks not pleasure but pain. The pain is not part of the pleasure of masochism: it is the unpleasant price that must be paid for the pleasure that precedes and follows it.

Writing about "the subject" makes me reflect again how infinitely more varied in its excitements is sado-mas. than straight sex. The sado-mas. couple have all the pleasures of straight fucking *plus* the myriad variations that sadomasochism brings with it—the marks that stay for days on the bottom, giving one a reminiscent thrill with each twinge; the anticipation of punishment, which can go on for a week or more and provoke masturbation a dozen times before the whipping actually happens; the multitudinous roles one can play—priest and novice, teacher and prefect, maid and master, doctor and patient (enema department) etc. etc.—each enabling one to savor different nuances of domination or submission. . . . And the games one can play! Really, there is no sport to touch it: it is not just a nocturnal relaxation, it is a way of life.

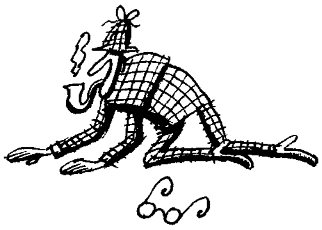
Feb. 23: Drinks at the Mostyn-Owens with Mary McCarthy, Stephen Spender, Robert Lowell, et al. Spender and Lowell discuss what poetry means in the 20th Century—Stephen naming Joyce and Virginia Woolf as "poets." I accuse him of annexing prose writers out of territorial ambition, and suggest that the existence of the word "poetry" is no reason to postulate the existence of poets. I propose that instead of saying that writers are (or are not) poets, we should simply say that they use *metaphor*. This would include playwrights and film-makers as well as novelists and poets. Stephen agrees.

Of Eliot, Lowell says that he was probably a paranoiac when he wrote his best poems, up to and including the Quartets. His marriage removed the paranoia, the need to write, and the ability to write poetry. Do we prefer (the unstated question runs) the miserable creator or the contented non-creator? I have no doubt which I would vote for.

March 13: I write a few hours before a press conference at which Larry will announce that from April 1, he and Peter Hall will be co-directors of the N.T. and that in October Peter will take over as sole boss. A few months ago Larry put this idea to John Dexter, Paddy Donnell [administrative director of the National Theatre] and myself: we all protested that it was a breach of his promise to us that he would stay until next spring. He agreed, and we thought the matter settled. Now, a few days ago, he has gone back on his word again and unilaterally decided to quit—leaving me awkwardly placed, since Peter wants me out of the way by the autumn.

April 10: Another Larry reminiscence: of the weekend Elaine [Dundy, Tynan's first wife] and I spent with him and Vivien [Leigh, Olivier's wife] at Notley Abbey in c. 1955. I had written some pretty devastating things about Vivien, which Larry had deeply resented (indeed, at one point he unfairly told me they had given her a nervous breakdown): Vivien herself, oddly, seemed almost excited by them, and it was always she who took the initiative when we met. Anyway, we arrived at Notley before lunch on a Saturday. Larry was away in Spain, where his brother had just died of cancer, and would not be back until dinner. Vivien was vivacious, metallic and in a high manic state, talking endlessly with eyes unnaturally bright. There was a lot to drink at lunch after which Elaine and I retired for a siesta. Our room had separate beds. No sooner had I stripped to my Y-fronts and fallen asleep than I felt the sheet slowly turned back and a hand placed on my genitals. It was Vivien, naked under a peignoir. I began to respond and then suddenly thought how impossible it would be to cuckold a man I venerated under his own roof—a really cock-crinkling thought. I muttered it to Vivien, who pouted a bit, but eventually rose to her feet—and tiptoed across to Elaine's bed. I hastily dressed: as I left the room, Vivien and Elaine were sleepily embracing.

Larry returned during dinner: the other guests were Vivien's mother and father, a petty-bourgeois former colonial administrator, I believe. Vivien's manner with L. is haughty and derisive: how can he bear it? But he does, bearlike staying the course. After dinner V.'s mother knits, father pulls on his pipe and reads the "Times." V. is drinking hard. "Come with me," she says to me, and to my consternation starts to lead me upstairs. "What for?" I say. "I'm going to put on Sybil's chainmail from St. Joan and you're going to help me," she says. I look at Larry. "Do as she says, Kennie," he says wearily. So up we go to a dressing room where hangs Sybil Thorndike's battle dress. V. points mischievously at a writing desk. "There's a secret drawer where Larry keeps letters from all his ladies. He doesn't think I know about it. Shall we peek?" I decline the offer. Vivien now strips down to petticoat, bra and knickers and I lower the heavy costume over her head. Thus encased, we return to the living room, where V. proceeds to render some of the longer speeches from "St. Joan," including "Light your fires." On an impulse she then sheds the chainmail. Mum is appalled: "Now, Miss," she says, addressing the 48-year-old like an errant schoolgirl. "That's quite enough of that. You mind your manners!" "What are you going to do, mummy?" says V. provocatively. "Spank me with a hairbrush?" Mum seems on the point of doing just that (what a scene that would have been!) when V.'s attention wanders back to me. "Let's see how Ken looks in armour!" she cries. Larry, drinking brandy in great gulps, looks up to meet my eye, nods heavily, and goes on drinking. I retire behind a screen, remove trousers and shirt and slip on the bloody corselet. Conversation continues as before, nobody referring to the fact that I am dressed as the Maid of Orleans. A saddening but surrealist night.



May 22: The more K. is convinced that I love her, the more she suffers when I see [N]. But I do love her and cannot help acting lovingly.

August 17: "A great drowsiness benumbs me from my awakening until evening; games occasionally shake it off, but I am gradually losing the habit of effort. . . . Sensual pleasure permeates everything; my finest virtues are dissipated and even the expression of my despair is blunted." (Gide's Journal, September 1905.) And I was blaming it all on amphetamines! I expect in fact that what Gide and I have in common is simply the torpor that comes from having a little money.

August 25: There is one important way in which I need not be sorry for K. Never in her life has she experienced what for most people is the most powerful, savage, heart-rending and unforgettable experience in their lives—and one which is constantly and agonizingly repeated—I mean the experience [of sexual rejection]. Bear in mind that what she is going through for the first (and probably last) time is what 90% of the human race expect to go through whenever they make a pass at a member of the opposite sex. She is like a member of an exclusive club who has lost—for some inexplicable reason—her right to park anywhere for any length of time and to use any other car parked within a mile's radius. 90% of the rest of us are pedestrians, and have been so since our teens.

Sept. 9: For lunch and dinner to Tony Richardson's private village in the hills behind St. Tropez. It consists of eight or nine cottages he bought seven years ago and knocked together into a rambling living unit that trickles down the side of a valley to a swimming pool. Exquisite place and nice people, including [the singer] Annie Ross and [the actor] Sean Lynch, and John Gielgud. I see that John is about to read "The Joint" by James Blake: he asks me what it's about.

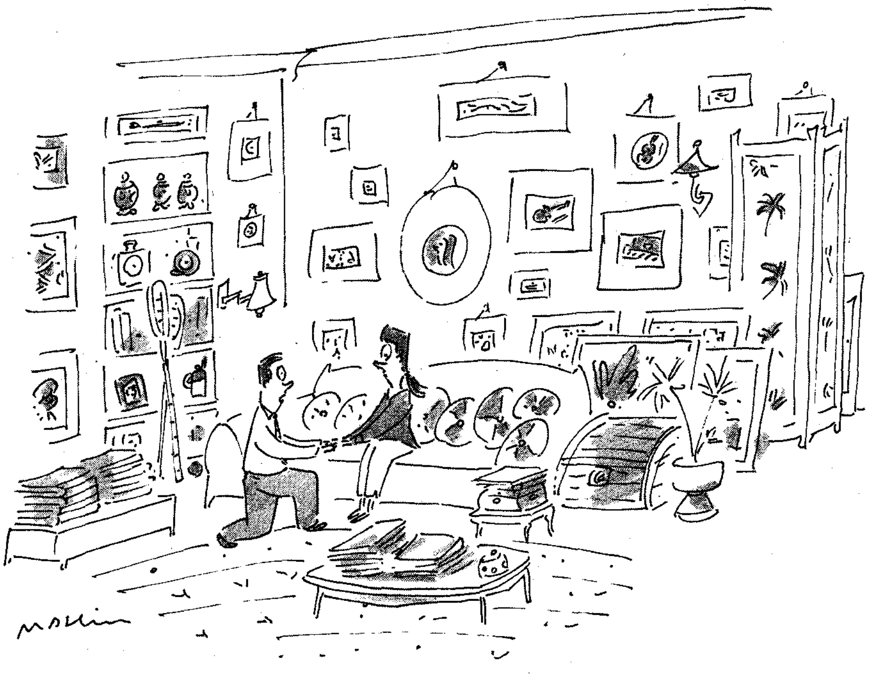
K.T.: It's about a masochistic convict who keeps getting himself imprisoned because he likes being sucked off by sadistic Negro murderers.

J.G.: Well, you can't quarrel with that.

J.G. does not swim and explains that like all his family he has had a lifelong horror of water. "I even used to hate washing," he remarks. "I was a very dirty little boy." Inconsequently he goes on to reveal that as a child he used to eat rubber—"the elastic out of my suspenders, rubber bands, anything I could get my hands on." A deeply eccentric man. At the end of dinner (taken al fresco by a mixture of moonlight and fairy lights), he suddenly starts and cries: "Good God! What on earth's happened to Grizelda?" Grizelda (Tony's current girlfriend) was sitting—as she had been all evening—on his left. He had temporarily omitted to notice her existence. Also at Tony's (for lunch): a splendid middle-aged Frenchwoman named Anne-Marie Saville, prominent in the Resistance, whose Anglophilia is so strong that she calls her three dogs Simpson, Fortnum and Mason, and changed her name from Schumann to Saville (after Saville Row).

Nov. 16: Peevish and neurotic attack by John Osborne on Larry, the N.T. and (especially) me, in a new book of interviews called "Olivier." He calls me "a disastrous influence" and an example of "intellectual spivery" (a typical late Osborne phrase—vaguely venomous, unsupported by evidence). I reply in the "Evening Standard" and in a letter to the "Sunday Times"; he replies to my reply in the "Standard." All we are really doing is selling newspapers and (of course) the book. No one is enlightened, no one wins. But it does give me a chance to state publicly that the N.T. has had a higher percentage of successes over ten years, critical and box office, than any other theatre company in English history. It is pleasant to get that on the record. Larry calls to thank me; but of course mud like this does not affect his reputation. It could, however, damage mine.

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve dinner for George Weidenfeld, Min Hogg, John and Miriam Gross. K. and I marinate a saddle of venison for 3 days and serve it in rich and complex sauce (with Nuits St-Georges), preceded by 12 oysters apiece (with Chassagne-Montrachet '71) and followed by Boccone Dolce, a delicious chocolate-strawberry-meringue layer-cake copied from Sardi's (with Dom Pérignon '64). A great success, so much so that George W., who seldom drinks, became raffishly drunk, started to talk about prewar Vienna, and invited us all to change into pajamas and nighties. He ended by wearing a broad-brimmed and rather sportive summer hat of mine and a nightdress of K.'s slung round his neck.... A memorable evening.



"I'd give you the moon and stars, Felicia, but I don't know where you'd put them."

January 11, 1974: Replaying an old Miles Davis L.P. I recall one of my encounters with the satanic elf. Some time late in the 50's I went to Birdland to hear him. Between sets he joined our table for a drink, and chatted in his rasping whisper quite amiably. Suddenly we were approached by a timid white teen-aged boy with an autograph album. Nervously he asked Miles for a signature and as Miles obliged he said: "I've always admired you, Mr. Davis. I play trumpet in my high school band and I think you have a wonderful embouchure. How do you get an embouchure like that?" Miles said casually: "I got it from sucking off little white boys like you." The boy absolutely froze. We all did. The words were spoken without passion, but they taught me more about feeling towards whites than dozens of liberal fund-raising sessions with Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte.

Feb. 23: I spend a weekend at a snug little hotel in Hampshire with [N]. On Saturday morning we motor to Bournemouth, where I spent most of my summers up to the age of 18, and revisit the beaches and chines where I first learned about sex, masturbated to the devoutly awaited weekly magazine "London Life," worshipped the concert party on Boscombe Pier . . . contemplated suicide (at 12) in the belief that I was pregnant, etc. The trip is less traumatic than I had feared (and hoped): but as we drive along the front I notice that Phil Silvers—perhaps the greatest comedian I ever saw on the Broadway stage, king of the one-line impromptu, last survivor of the last generation of comics who were actually reared in burlesque—is appearing live at the Pavilion in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." Phil is an old friend and he has never appeared in England: I did not even know he was in the country. So we go to his hotel and call his room: it's 11:30 a.m. but his voice sounds impenetrably fogged and thick. He arranges to see us after the show (which is on tour in hopes of a London booking), but I conclude that he is hungover—which is odd, considering that when I knew him well in the States, he (like most Jewish comedians) was a teetotaller. In the evening we see the show. The theatre is only half full, and Phil—well, his timing is still flawless, his mime is exquisite, his mastery of the audience complete—but he moves haltingly and his voice is hoarse. I explain to [N.] that she has not seen the great man at his best. When we go backstage, he embraces me with real feeling (I'm always moved by the way Americans remember me with far more affection than Englishmen) and asks me what I thought of the show and him. I say that I loved him, and as soon as he recovers from his sore throat— At this his face falls. "Thought I'd covered that up," he says; and goes on to explain that two years ago, after a triumphant opening in Los Angeles, he had a stroke and spent ten weeks in the hospital, since which time he has had to learn to talk (and walk) all over again. I am appalled by my gaffe. He adds that he started rehearsal for the current production *on walking sticks*. Over supper he tells us, with not the least trace of self-pity, that he has lately been divorced, leaving five daughters and an ex-wife to be supported. We reminisce about Jack Benny and Groucho (and the girls I introduced to Phil when he first visited England—Kay Kendall, Claire Bloom and Jill Bennett were among them: like many of these Jewish non-drinkers, he has total recall): we laugh a lot: but I have the bleak and comfortless premonition that he may not have long to live. I hate the fact that I never devoted a full-length essay to this matchless, whiplash clown, now slowed down so much by infirmity that he might be performing underwater. Even in this shape, however, he is better value than all but a tiny handful of British comics—among them, of course, Eric Morecambe, to whom Phil pays characteristically generous tributes.

"A pleasure, Hargrove. Finally, a C.E.O. who looks like a C.E.O."

Apr. 4: To Greenwich to see Jonathan Miller's production of "Hamlet." . . . Once again I reflect how neatly it would fit the play if Hamlet were in fact Claudius' bastard, the fruit of his liaison with Gertrude. The affair has been going on for decades before it finally erupts into murder: and what an edge this gives to Claudius' first line to Hamlet: "And now our cousin Hamlet, *and our son*."

And to the reply: "A little more than kin, and less than kind. . . . I am too much *i'th' sun*."

Not to mention the sense it makes of the enigmatic exchange between the two when Hamlet leaves for England and addresses Claudius as his "mother": "Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so—my mother." I am not saying that this was the author's intention, but it would not be a *betrayal* of his intention to stage the play in this light.

Sept. 10: Last night Ethel Merman opened at the Palladium (her first time there). An ecstatic occasion, standing ovations, and the lady at her militant best (she really made musical comedy a martial art). I love her *defiance*, the feeling that she can survive anything. . . . And her effortlessness: audiences nowadays expect strain and sweat, as provided by pop stars; Merman's golden flow astounds them. America is a democracy and Merman is American to the core; yet she sums up the contradiction of American democracy when she sings, with all her bellicose uniqueness:

"Some people
May be content
Playing bingo
And paying rent
But *some people*
Ain't me."

Another deeply American thing about her is that Cole Porter (of all contrasting people) wrote his best songs for her: the dapper upper-class wit inspired by this brassy broad from Queens. This would be inconceivable in Britain—as if Noël Coward had written for Gracie Fields. (Merman incidentally should add a few Coward songs to her repertoire—"Twentieth Century Blues" or "Sail Away," for example, not to mention the wonderful "Sigh No More." She has, in spades, that gallant rise-above-it quality that so many of Noël's songs celebrate.)

There won't be another Merman because there is no need today for a voice like hers. At 64 (or 65?), she used a radio mike last night: but on Broadway she never used anything but the usual minimikes in the footlights, and often not even those. Streisand might have been her successor, but . . . Streisand couldn't give a performance like Merman's last night because no one's ever written for her. Almost everything Merman sings was custom-made for her voice and personality: and it shows: the clothes fit like second skins, the colors suit her.

She keeps her distance. What she sells is the song, not herself: you don't miss a syllable. One recalls that never in her Broadway career did she have to address the audience directly, as now: she always played roles in book shows. There are stars you admire and stars you identify with. Merman is one of the former, who have in recent years literally ceased to exist. The audience called her back for ten minutes, cheering and begging for encores: she thanked them but said, "I haven't any more music rehearsed." Professional to the last, she wouldn't insult her admirers by giving them anything unprepared.

RELICS

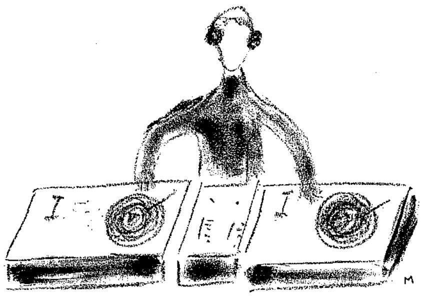
After a time, Hoss, it makes such little difference
What anyone writes—
Relics, it seems, of the thing
are always stronger than the thing itself.
Palimpsest and pentimento, for instance, saint's bones
Or saint's blood,
Transcendent architecture of what was possible, say,
once upon a time.

The dogwoods bloom, the pink ones and the white ones, in blots
And splotches across the dusk.
Like clouds, perhaps. Mock clouds
In a mock Heaven,
The faint odor of something unworldly, or otherworldly,
Lingering in the darkness, then not.
As though some saint had passed by the side yard,
the odor of Paradise,

As Aldo Buzzi has it,
Odor of Heaven, the faithful say.
And what is this odor like? someone who'd smelled it was asked once.
He had no answer, and said,

Oct. 1: Yesterday a bald, deaf, elderly Canadian came to interview me on C. S. Lewis, about whom he is writing a book. Into his hearing aid I bellowed reminiscences of this great man, whose mind was Johnsonian without the bullying and Chestertonian without the facetiousness. If I were ever to stray into the Christian camp, it would be because of Lewis's arguments as expressed in books like "Miracles." (He never intruded them into tutorials.) Because I stammered, he kindly undertook to read my weekly essays aloud for me, and the prospect of hearing my words pronounced in that wonderfully juicy and judicious voice had a permanently disciplining effect on my prose style. He was a deeply kind and charitable man, too. Once in the summer of 1948 I came to him in despair: Jill Rowe-Dutton had jilted me on the eve of what was to have been our marriage, and I had spent most of the term in and out of bed with bronchial diseases that I was sure would soon culminate in TB. I brought my troubles to Lewis, asking him whether I could postpone my final examinations until Christmas. To this he at once agreed: after which he got on with the Christian business of consolation. He reminded me how I had once told him about the parachuted landmine which, dropping from a German bomber during an air-raid in 1940, so narrowly missed our house in Birmingham that next morning we recovered some of the parachute silk from our chimney. (The mine destroyed six houses across the road and blew out all our windows.) But for that hairsbreadth—a matter of inches only—I would already (Lewis gently pointed out) have been dead for eight years. Every moment of life since then had been a bonus, a tremendous free gift, a present that only the blackest ingratitude could refuse. As I listened to him, my problems began to dwindle to their proper proportions; I had entered his room suicidal, and I left it exhilarated.

Oct. 29: Off to the Gaumont Cinema, Kilburn, for a closed-circuit telecast of the heavyweight championship fight between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali. The audience is 90% black (we had to summon a black security guard to eject two blacks, wearing fur coats and hats, from our seats) and Ali does not let them down. He is not only skilled, graceful, arrogant and flamboyant: he is a brilliant strategist and enormously tough. Instead of skipping away from the giant Foreman, as predicted, he leans on the ropes and for 4 rounds simply soaks up punishment—to the total bewilderment of the champion, who slugs his heart out to no effect. Then Ali counter-attacks with incredibly well-aimed combination bombardments, always hitting the head and chin: and suddenly the looming thug is off balance, tottering and felled. Ali crows in triumph, baring his teeth: what a bitch he is, what a vain, pugnacious bitch! All the auguries were upset. They said he would run and he stood; they said he was old (7 years older than Foreman) and he looked a stripling; they said he lacked a punch, and he knocked out the heaviest puncher in the world. "I am the scholar of boxing," he said afterwards, and rightly. Quite apart from his enormous physical presence and skill, he uses the English language like an Elizabethan. Back home to bed at 4:30 a.m., wakeful and exhilarated by what we have seen.



Nov. 10: An entry postponed from October 8, when K. and I dined *à quatre* with Jill Bennett and John Osborne,

“It doesn’t resemble any flower or any bloom or spice on this earth.
I wouldn’t know how to describe it.”
Lingering as the dark comes on.

St. Gaspare del Buffalo was one of these fragrant saints,
Buzzi continues,
St. Gaspare, who walked in the rain without an umbrella and still
stayed dry.
Miraculous gift.
He knew, he added, one of the saint’s relatives, a pianist,
who served him an ossobuco once
In a penthouse in Milan.

Let’s see. A cold spring in Charlottesville,
End of April, 2000—
If you can’t say what you’ve got to say in three lines,
better change your style.
Nobody’s born redeemed, nobody’s moonlight, golden fuse in the
deadly trees.
White wind through black wires,
humming a speech we do not speak.
Listen for us in the dark hours, listen for us in our need.

—*Charles Wright*

with whom I have been feuding for years. . . . A few nights earlier we had found ourselves sharing a table . . . at a Dorchester Hotel party after the première of “That’s Entertainment.” It occurred to both of us that, for all our mutual vituperation, we were still more exciting than anybody else present, and that we therefore ought to spend more time in each other’s company. The result was a superb Thurloe Square dinner (one of our best, including Gateau Marjolaine) and a lot of happily candid talk about sex. “I love little pink anuses,” said John at one point; and it was confirmed—what I’d known at second hand for years—that John is as entranced by smacked bottoms and opened bumholes as I am, and—which I already knew at first hand, though 20 years ago—as Jill is. (Jill also revealed that John pees *sitting down*.) By the end of the evening we were fast friends, and it occurred to K. and me—and, I think, to the Osbornes—that here was a couple with whom one could seriously consider wife-swapping. A final sour note: K. refused to demonstrate obedience by removing her knickers. A tremendous fight ensued, after the Osbornes had left: K. had made a very crucial psychological misjudgment, or a very ill-timed display of principled honesty.

Having watched Peter Sellers on the Parkinson show last night, I recall the dismal occasion in 1959 when I introduced him (at his own request) to Mike Nichols in New York. Mike arrived with Elaine May (his cabaret partner: she was not yet a director): Peter arrived with his wife and Graham Stark, a minor Goon. We dined at Sardi’s East. Nothing that Peter said amused Mike; nothing that Mike said amused Peter. The sly, pragmatic, New York Jewish sense of humor meant nothing to Peter; and the giggling facetious, whimsical fantastic Goon jokes of Sellers seemed merely embarrassing to Mike. I’ve never been more conscious of the abyss that separates British humor from the specialized world of Jewish Manhattan.

Dec. 6: One reason why I cannot write nowadays is that I no longer have a *stance*, an attitude, what Eliot called in a letter to Lytton Strachey “the core of it—the *tone*.” I used to have a sign by my desk: “Be light, stinging, insolent and melancholy.” But I am no longer any of these things, except melancholy. Can one have a stance without a cogent moral or political philosophy? Or is it emotional wholeness that one needs—the quality I sacrificed when I divided myself between [N.] and K.? Or is that cart-before-horse? Could I have split myself if I had not already lost my entireness?

Dec. 10: Lytton Strachey writing in a letter about his work in progress on Queen Elizabeth: “If only she could be reduced to nonsense—that would be perfect. The whole of Art lies there. To pulverize the material and remold it in the shape of one’s own particular absurdity. What happiness to do that!” . . . Am, by the way, enormously pleased to read that Strachey wrote nothing at all (except a mediocre piece on Disraeli for a women’s magazine) between August 1919 and May 1923 (age 39-43).

What to learn from the Bloomsberries? Their insistence that friendship comes before all other passions, from patriotism to sex, and must never be sacrificed on account of the latter. Also their attempts (never *quite* successful, but more often so than one would have thought) to extirpate the wasteful emotion of jealousy. One marvels at Strachey’s Ham Spray household—with Ralph Partridge loving Carrington, who loved Strachey, who loved Partridge, surrounded by Gerald Brennan (fucking Carrington), Henrietta Bingham (fucking Carrington), and Frances Marshall (being fucked by Partridge). That all this went on with no bloodshed and so little agony is a tribute to a group who, however anemic their writing may have been, were not bloodless in their private lives.

Dec. 15: [N.] at last confesses that, contrary to earlier protestations, she has had several brief affairs in my absences during the past two years. This news, on top of what I already know (and suspect) about Kathleen’s affairs, leads to a curious conclusion: though accused on all sides of infidelity, I am the only one of the principals in this situation who has remained sexually faithful throughout. ♦

(*This is the first part of a two-part article.*)

ANNALS OF MEDICINE

WHEN GOOD DOCTORS GO BAD

What happens when trusted physicians begin to hurt their patients?

BY ATUL GAWANDE

Hank Goodman is a former orthopedic surgeon. He is fifty-six years old and stands six feet one, with thick, tousled brown hair and outsized hands that you can easily imagine snapping a knee back into place. He is calm and confident, a man used to fixing bone. At one time, before his license was taken away, he was a highly respected and sought-after surgeon. "He could do some of the best, most brilliant work around," one of his orthopedic partners told me. When other doctors needed an orthopedist for family and friends, they called on him. Over a decade and a half, Goodman came to be among the busiest surgeons in his state. Along the way, however, things started to go wrong. He cut corners, got sloppy. Patients were hurt. Colleagues who had once admired him grew appalled. And still it was years before he was stopped.

When people talk about bad doctors, they usually talk about the monsters. We hear about doctors like Harold Shipman, the physician from the North of England who was recently convicted of murdering fifteen patients with lethal doses of narcotics. Or John Ronald Brown, a San Diego surgeon who, working without a license, bungled a series of sex-change operations, and amputated the left leg of a perfectly healthy man, who then died of gangrene. Or James Burt, a notorious Ohio gynecologist who subjected hundreds of women, often after they had been anesthetized for other procedures, to a bizarre, disfiguring operation involving clitoral circumcision and vaginal "reshaping," which he called the Surgery of Love.

But the real problem isn't these frightening aberrations. It is what you might call the everyday bad doctors, like Hank Goodman. In medicine, we all come to know such doctors: the illustrious cardiologist who has slowly gone senile and won't retire; the long-respected obstetrician with a drinking problem; the surgeon who has somehow lost his touch. Good doctors can go bad, and when they do the medical profession is almost entirely unequipped to do anything about it.

Goodman and I talked over the course of a year. He sounded as baffled as anyone by what had become of him, but he agreed to tell his story so that others could learn from his experience. He even put me in touch with former colleagues and patients. His only request was that I not use his real name.

One case began on a hot August day in 1991. Goodman was at the hospital—a sprawling, modern, floodlit complex, with a towering red brick building at its center, surrounded by several smaller facilities, all fed by an extensive network of outlying clinics and a nearby medical school. Situated off a long corridor on the ground floor of the main building were the operating rooms, with their white-tiled, wide-open spaces, the patients laid out, each under a canopy of lights, and teams of blue-clad people going about their business. In one of these rooms, Goodman finished an operation, pulled off his gown, and went over to a wall phone to respond to his messages while waiting for the room to be cleaned. One was from his physician assistant, at the office, half a block away. He wanted to talk to Goodman about Mrs. D.

Mrs. D. was twenty-eight years old, a mother of two, and the wife of the business manager of a local auto-body shop. She had originally come to Goodman about a painless but persistent fluid swelling on her knee. He had advised surgery, and she had agreed to it. The week before, he had done an operation to remove the fluid. But now, the assistant reported, she was back; she felt feverish and ill, and her knee was intolerably painful. On examination, he told Goodman, the knee was red, hot, and tender. When he put a needle into the joint, foul-smelling pus came out. What should he do?

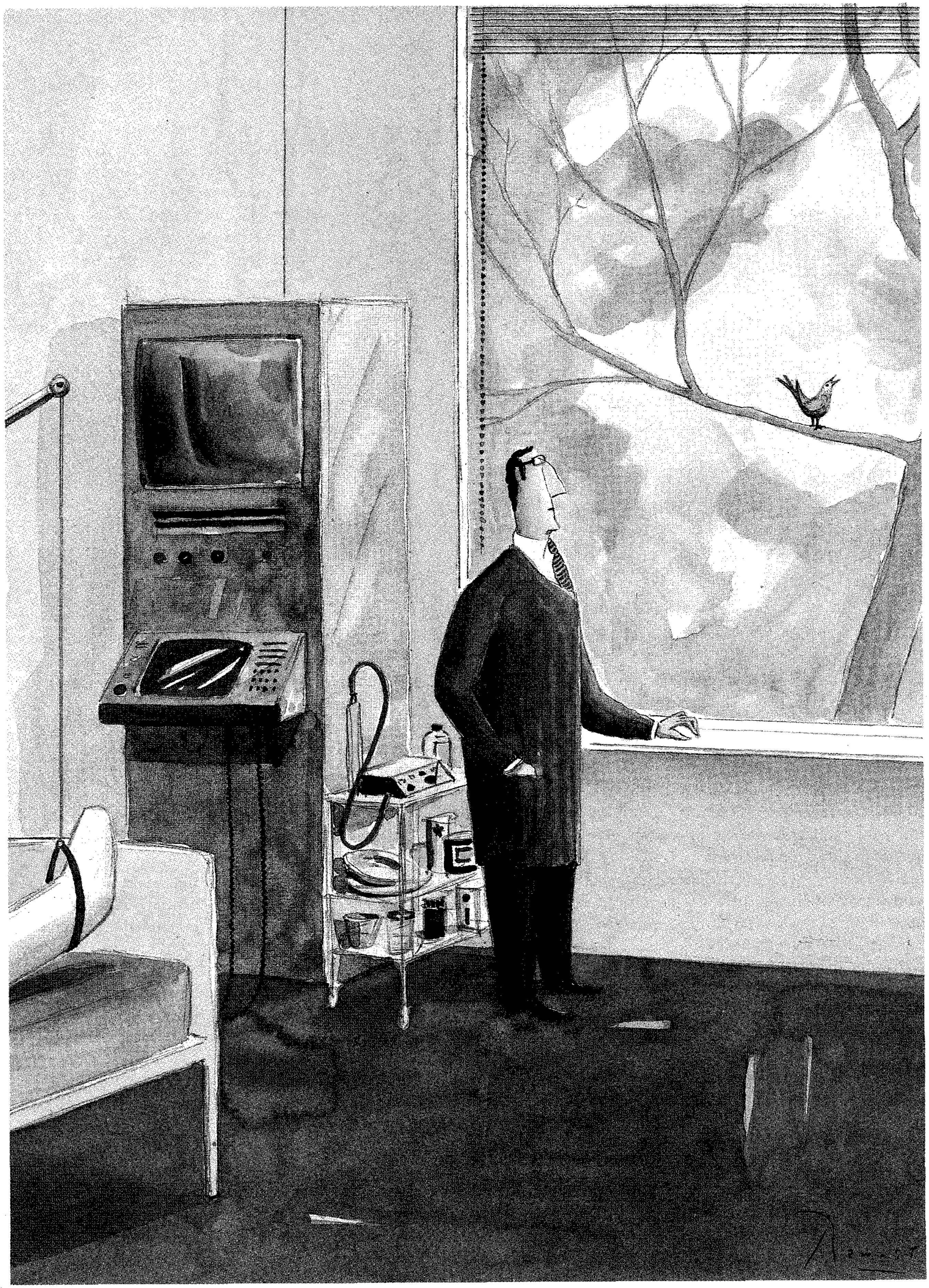
It was clear from this description that the woman was suffering from a disastrous infection, that she had to have the knee opened and drained as soon as possible. But Goodman was busy, and he never considered the idea. He didn't bring her into the hospital. He didn't go to see her. He didn't even have a colleague see her. Send her out on oral antibiotics, he said. The assistant expressed some doubt, to which Goodman responded, "Ah, she's just a whiner."

A week later, the patient came back, and Goodman finally drained her knee. But it was too late. The infection had consumed the cartilage. Her entire joint was destroyed. Later, she saw another orthopedist, but all he could do was fuse her knee solid to stop the constant pain of bone rubbing against bone.

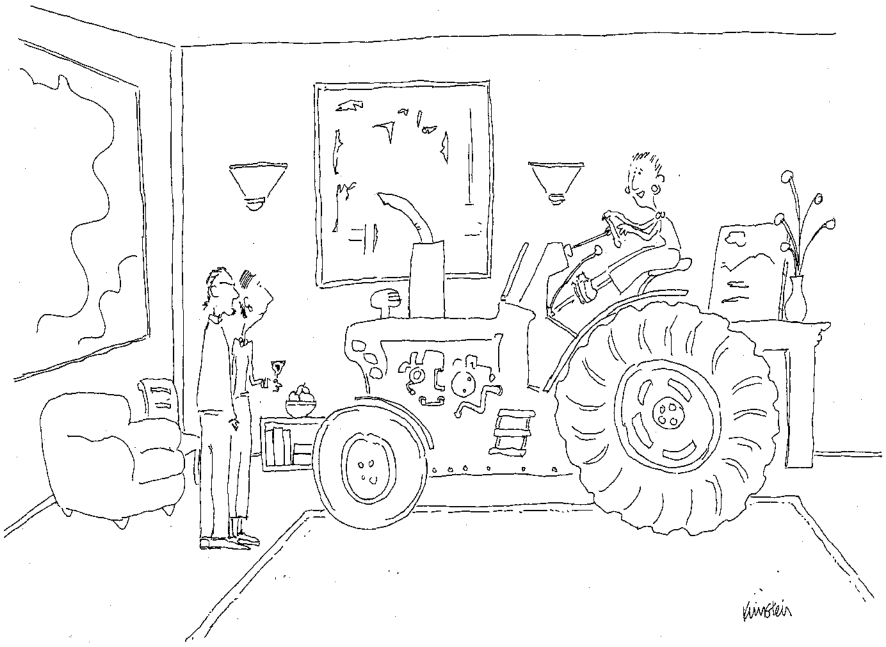
When I spoke to her, she sounded remarkably philosophical. "I've adapted," she told me. With a solid knee, though, she said she can't run, can't bend down to pick up a child. She took several falls down the stairs of her split-level home, and she and her family had to move to a ranch-style house for safety's sake. She cannot sit on airplanes. In movie theatres, she has to sit sidewise on an aisle. Not long ago, she went to see a doctor about getting an artificial knee, but she was told that, because of the previous damage, it couldn't safely be done.

Every physician is capable of making a dumb, cavalier decision like Goodman's, but in his last few years of practice he made them over and over again. In one case, he put the wrong-size screw into a patient's broken ankle, and didn't notice that the screw had gone in too deep. When the patient complained of pain, Goodman refused to admit that anything needed to be done. In a sim-

BENOÎT VAN INNIS



We like to think of "problem doctors" as aberrations; the aberrations may be those who make it without a troubled year or two.



"I got it from eBay."

• •

ilar case, he put a wrong-size screw into a broken elbow. The patient came back when the screw head had eroded through the skin. Goodman could easily have cut the screw to size, but he did nothing.

Another case involved an elderly man who'd come in with a broken hip. It looked as if he would need only a few pins to repair the fracture. In the operating room, however, the hip wouldn't come together properly. Goodman told me that he should have changed course and done a total hip replacement. But it had already been a strenuous day, and he couldn't endure the prospect of a longer operation. He made do with pins. The hip later fell apart and became infected. Each time the man came in, Goodman insisted there was nothing to be done. In time, the bone almost completely dissolved. Finally, the patient went to one of Goodman's colleagues for a second opinion. The colleague was horrified by what he found. "He ignored this patient's pleas for help," the surgeon told me. "He just wouldn't do anything. He literally wouldn't bring the patient into the hospital. He ignored the obvious on X-rays. He could have killed this guy the way things were going."

For the last several years that Goodman was in practice, he was the defendant in a stream of malpractice suits, despite settling each one as quickly as possible. His botched cases became a staple of his department's Morbidity and Mortality conferences, the closed-door sessions in which doctors are expected to review their mistakes and complications.

Sitting with him over breakfast in a corner of a downtown restaurant, I asked him how all this could have happened. Words seemed to elude him. "I don't know," he said faintly.

Goodman grew up in a small northwestern town, the second child of five in an electrical contractor's family, and neither he nor anyone else ever imagined that he might become a doctor. In college, a local state university, he was at first an aimless, mediocre student. Then one night he was up late drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes, and taking notes for a paper on Henry James when it came to him: "I said to myself, 'You know, I think I'll go into medicine.' " It was not exactly an inspiration, he said. "I just came to a decision without much foundation I could ever see." A minister once told him that it sounded "more like a call than I ever got."

Goodman became a dedicated student, got into an excellent medical school, and headed for a career in surgery after graduation. After completing military duty as a general medical officer in the Air Force, he was accepted into one of the top orthopedics-residency programs in the country. He found the work deeply satisfying, despite the gruelling hours. He was good at it. People came in with intensely painful conditions—dislocated joints, fractured hips, limbs, spines—and he fixed them. "Those were the four best years of my life," he said. Afterward, he did some subspecialty training in hand surgery, and when he finished, in 1978, he had a wide range of choices. He ended up back in the Northwest, where he would spend the next fifteen years.

"When he came to the clinic here, we had three older, rusty and crusty orthopedic surgeons," a pediatrics colleague of his told me. "They were out of date and out of touch, and they weren't very nice to people. Then here comes this fellow, who's a sweetheart of a guy, more up to date, and he doesn't say no to anybody. You call him at eight o'clock at night with a kid who needs his hip tapped because of infection, and he'll come in and do it—and he's not even the one on call." He won a teaching award from his medical students. He attracted a phenomenal amount of business. He revelled in the job.

Sometime around 1990, however, things changed. With his skill and experience, Goodman knew better than most what needed to be done for Mrs. D., for the man with the shattered hip, and for many other patients, but he did not do it. What happened? All he could tell me was that everything seemed wrong those last few years. He used to enjoy being in the operating room, fixing people. After a while, though, it seemed that the only thing he thought about was getting through all his patients as quickly as possible.

Was money part of the problem? He made about two hundred thousand dollars a year at first, and the more patients he saw and the more cases he took the more money he made. Pushing himself, he found that he could make three hundred thousand dollars. Pushing himself even harder, until he was handling a dizzying number of cases, he made four hundred thousand dollars. He was far busier than any of his partners, and that fact increasingly became, in his mind, a key measure of his worth. He began to call himself, only half in jest, "the Producer." More than one colleague mentioned to me that he had become fixated on his status as the No. 1 booker.

His sense of himself as a professional also made him unwilling to turn people away. (He was, after all, the guy who never said no.) Whatever the cause, his caseload had clearly become overwhelming. He'd been working eighty, ninety, a hundred hours a week for well over a decade. He had a wife and three children—the children are grown now—but he didn't see much of them. His schedule was packed tight, and he needed absolute efficiency to get through it all. He'd begin with, say, a total hip replacement at 7:30 A.M. and try to finish in two hours or so. Then he'd pull off his gown, tear through the paperwork, and, as the room was being cleaned, stride out the main tower doors, into the sun, or snow, or rain, over to the outpatient-surgery unit, half a block away. He'd have another patient waiting on the table there—a simple case, maybe a knee arthroscopy or a carpal-tunnel release. Near the end, he'd signal a nurse to call ahead and have the next patient wheeled into the O.R. back in the main tower. He'd close skin on the second case and then bolt back for a third. He went back and forth all day. Yet, no matter what he did to keep up, unforeseen difficulties arose—a delay in getting a room ready, a new patient in the emergency room, an unexpected problem in an operation. Over time, he came to find the snags unbearable. That's undoubtedly when things became dangerous. Medicine requires the fortitude to take what comes: your schedule may be packed, the hour late, your child waiting for you to pick him up after swimming practice; but if a problem arises you have to do what is necessary. Time after time, Goodman failed to do so.

This sort of burnout is surprisingly common. Doctors are supposed to be tougher, steadier, better able to handle pressure than most. (Don't the rigors of medical training weed out the weak ones?) But the evidence suggests otherwise. Studies show, for example, that alcoholism is no less common among doctors than among other people. Doctors are more likely to become addicted to prescription narcotics and tranquillizers, presumably because we have such easy access to them. Some thirty-two per cent of the general working-age population develops at least one serious mental disorder—such as major depression, mania, panic disorder, psychosis, or addiction—and there is no evidence that such disorders are any less common among doctors. And, of course, doctors become ill, old, and disaffected or distracted by their own difficulties, and for these and similar reasons they falter in their care of patients. We'd all like to think of "problem doctors" as aberrations. The aberration may be a doctor who makes it through a forty-year career without at least a troubled year or two. Not everyone with "problems" is necessarily dangerous, of course. Nonetheless, at any given time, an estimated three to five per cent of practicing physicians are actually unfit to see patients.

There's an official line about how the medical profession is supposed to deal with these physicians: colleagues are expected to join forces promptly to remove them from practice and report them to the medical-licensing authorities, who, in turn, are supposed to discipline them or expel them from the profession. It hardly ever happens that way. Marilynn Rosenthal, a sociologist at the University of Michigan, has examined how medical communities in the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden deal with problem physicians. She has gathered data on what happened in more than two hundred specific cases, ranging from a family physician with a barbiturate addiction to a fifty-three-year-old cardiac surgeon who continued operating despite permanent cerebral damage from a stroke. And nearly everywhere she looked she found the same thing. It was a matter of months, even years, before colleagues took effective action against a bad doctor, however dangerous his or her conduct might have been.

People have called this a conspiracy of

"Oh, just picking up the pieces of my life after a really traumatic haircut."

silence, but Rosenthal did not find plotting so much as a sorry lack of it. In the medical communities she observed, the dominant reaction was uncertainty, denial, and dithering, feckless intervention. This won't come as a surprise to members of the medical profession. For one thing, although everyone may "know" that Dr. So-and-So drinks too much or has become "too old," certainty can remain elusive.

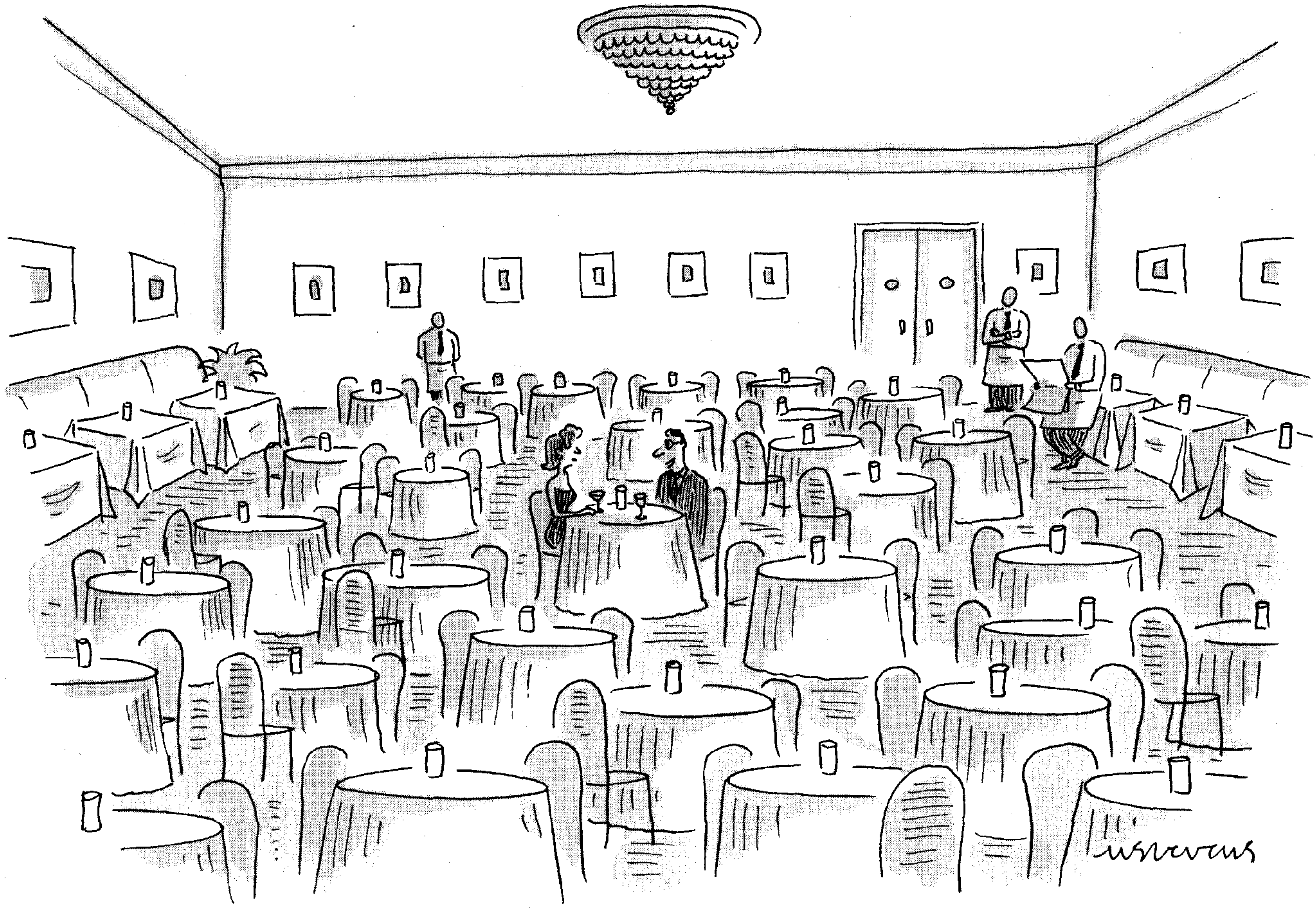
Even when the problems are obvious, colleagues can take a long time before doing anything decisive. There are both honorable and dishonorable reasons for this. The dishonorable reason is that doing nothing is easy. It takes an enormous amount of work and self-assurance to gather from colleagues the evidence and the votes that are needed to suspend another doctor's privileges to practice. The honorable reason, and probably the main reason, is that no one really has the heart for it. When a skilled, decent, ordinarily conscientious colleague, whom you've known and worked with for years, starts popping Percodans, or becomes preoccupied with personal problems, and neglects the proper care of his patients, you want to help, not destroy the doctor's career. In private practice, there are no sabbaticals to offer, no leaves of absence, only disciplinary proceedings and public reports of misdeeds. As a consequence, people try to help, but they do it quietly, privately. Their intentions are good; the result usually isn't.

For a long time, Hank Goodman's colleagues tried to help him. Starting around 1990, they began to have suspicions. There was talk of the bizarre decisions, the dubious complications, a growing number of lawsuits. More and more, people felt the need to step in.

A few of the older physicians, each acting on his own, took him aside at one point or another. Rosenthal calls this the Terribly Quiet Chat. A partner would see Goodman at a cocktail party or just happen to drop by his home. He'd pull Goodman aside, ask how he was doing, tell him that people had concerns. Another took the tough-love approach: "I said to him straight out, 'I don't know what makes you tick. Your behavior is totally bizarre. The scary thing is I wouldn't let my family members go near you.' "

Sometimes this approach can work. I spoke to a retired department head at Harvard who had initiated more than a few Terribly Quiet Chats. A senior physician can have forbidding moral authority in medicine. Many wayward doctors whom the department head confronted confessed to having troubles, and he did what he could to help. He'd arrange to have them see a psychiatrist, or go to a drug-rehab center, or retire. But some doctors didn't follow through. Others denied that anything was wrong. A few went so far as to mount small campaigns in their defense. They would have family members call him in outrage, loyal colleagues stop him in the hospital halls to say they'd never seen any wrongdoing, lawyers threaten to sue.

Goodman did listen to what people



"This place is one of New York's best-kept secrets."

had to say. He nodded and confessed that he felt overworked, at times overwhelmed. He vowed to make changes, to accept fewer cases and stop rushing through them, to perform surgery as he knew it should be performed. He would walk away mortified, resolving to mend his ways. But in the end nothing changed.

As is often the case, the people who were in the best position to see how dangerous Goodman had become were in the worst position to do anything about it: junior physicians, nurses, ancillary staff. In such circumstances, the support staff will often take measures to protect patients. Nurses find themselves quietly directing patients to other doctors. Receptionists suddenly have trouble finding openings in a doctor's schedule. Senior surgical residents scrub in on junior-level operations to make sure a particular surgeon doesn't do anything harmful.

In one case, the junior colleagues of a professor of internal medicine went so far as to review, in secret, virtually every decision he made. The internist was a doctor of exquisite skill and judgment, a nationally known figure who had taught a generation of young doctors. But then his wife became ill with breast cancer, and during a four-year battle that ended in her death he grew discouraged and listless. He made mistakes: in one patient he missed a thyroid mass, in another a heart murmur. Concerned about what was happening, colleagues began looking through his charts, first randomly and then, when they saw the number of errors, systematically. They ordered the medicines he should have ordered, admitted the patients he should have admitted, conducted complete diagnostic workups in his name. Each day, after the professor left his clinic, they would review all his decisions with the nurses to find the lapses and fix them. They continued to intervene until his ordeal was over and he regained his clinical acumen.

One of Goodman's physician assistants tried to take on this protective role. When he first began working with Goodman—helping to set fractures, following patients' progress, and assisting in the operating room—he revered the man. But he noticed when Goodman became erratic. "He'd run through forty patients in a day and not spend five minutes with them," the assistant told me. To avert problems in the clinic, he stayed late after hours, double-checking Goodman's decisions. "I was constantly following up with patients and changing what he did for them." In the operating room, he tried to make gentle suggestions. "Is that screw too long?" he might ask. "Does the alignment on that hip look right?" There were nonetheless mistakes, and "a lot of unnecessary surgery," he said. When he could, he steered patients away from Goodman—"though without actually coming out and saying, 'I think he's crazy.' "

Matters can drift along this way for a remarkably long time. But when someone has exhausted all reservoirs of good will—when the Terribly Quiet Chats are clearly going nowhere and there seems to be no end to the behind-the-scenes work colleagues have to do—the mood can change swiftly. The smallest matter can precipitate drastic action. With Goodman, it was skipping the mandatory weekly Morbidity and Mortality conferences, which he started to do in late 1993. As negligent as his patient care could be—he had become one of the hospital's most frequently sued doctors—people remained uncomfortable about judging him. When Goodman stopped attending M. & M.s, however, his colleagues finally had a concrete violation to confront him with.

Various people warned him, with increasing sharpness, that he would be in serious trouble if he didn't start showing up at M. & M.s. "But he ignored them all," a colleague of his told me. In late 1994, when he still didn't show up, the hospital board put him on probation. Through all this, he was operating on more patients and generating ever more complications. And still a whole year went by. Soon after Labor Day of 1995, the board and its lawyer finally sat him down at the end of a long conference table and told him that they were suspending his operating privileges and referring his conduct to the state medical board for investigation. He was fired.

Goodman had never let on to his family about his difficulties, and he didn't tell them when he'd lost his job. Each morning for weeks, he put on a suit and tie and went to his office, as if nothing had changed. He saw the last of his scheduled patients, and referred those who needed an operation to others. His practice dried up within a month. His wife sensed that something was wrong, and he finally told her. She was floored, and frightened: she felt as if he were a stranger, an impostor. After that, he just stayed home in bed. He spoke to no one for days at a time.

Two months after his suspension, Goodman was notified of another malpractice suit, this one on behalf of a farmer's wife who had come to him with a severely arthritic shoulder. He had put in an artificial joint, but the repair failed. The lawsuit was the last straw. "I had nothing," he told me. "I had friends and family, yes, but no job." As with many doctors, his job was his identity.

In his basement den, he had a gun, a .44 Magnum that he had bought for a fishing trip to Alaska, to protect him against bears. He found the bullets for the gun and contemplated suicide. He knew how to do it so that his death would be instantaneous. He was, after all, a surgeon.

Two years ago, I was at a medical conference near Palm Springs, skimming through the dense lecture schedule, when an unusual presentation caught my eye: "Two Hundred Physicians Reported for Disruptive Behavior," by Kent Neff, M.D. The lecture was in a small classroom away from the main lecture hall. At most, a few dozen people attended. Neff was fifty-ish, trim, silver-haired, and earnest, and he turned out to have what must be the most closeted subspecialty in medicine: he was a psychiatrist specializing in doctors and other professionals with serious behavioral problems. In 1994, he told us, he had taken charge of a small program to help hospitals and medical groups with troubled doctors. Before long, they were sending him doctors from all over. To date, he'd seen more than two hundred and fifty, a remarkable wealth of experience, and he went through the data he'd collected like a C.D.C. scientist analyzing an outbreak of tuberculosis.

What he found was unsurprising. The doctors were often not recognized to be dangerous until they had done considerable damage. They were rarely given a thorough evaluation for addiction, mental illness, or other typical afflictions. And, when problems *were* identified, the follow-through was abysmal. What impressed me was Neff's single-handed, quixotic attempt—he had no grants, no assistance from government agencies—to do something about this.

A few months after the lecture, I flew to Minneapolis to see Neff in action. His program was at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, near the city's Powderhorn district. When I arrived, I was directed to the fifth floor of a brick building discreetly off to one side of the main hospital complex. There I found a long, dimly lit hallway with closed, unmarked doors on both sides and beige, low-pile carpeting. It looked nothing like a hospital. A block-lettered sign read "Professional Assessment Program." Neff, in a tweed jacket and metal-rimmed glasses, came out of one of the doors and showed me around.

Each Sunday night, the physicians arrived here, suitcases in hand. They checked in down the hall and were shown to dormitory-style rooms where they would stay for four days and four nights. Three doctor-patients were staying during the week that I visited. They were permitted to come and go as they pleased, Neff assured me. Yet I knew that they were not quite free. In most cases, their hospitals had paid a fee of seven thousand dollars, telling them that if they wanted to keep their practices they had to go to Minneapolis.

The most striking aspect of the program, it seemed to me, was that Neff had actually persuaded medical organizations to send the doctors. He had done this, it seemed, by simply offering to help. For all their dithering, hospitals and clinics turned out to be eager for Neff's help. And they weren't the only ones. Before long, airlines began sending him pilots. Courts sent him judges. Companies sent him C.E.O.s.

A small part of what Neff did was just meddle. He was like one of those doctors whom you consult about a coughing child, and who then tell you how to run your life. He'd take the doctors in hand, but he was not shy about telling organizations when they had let a problem fester too long. There are certain kinds of behavior—what he called "behavioral sentinel events"—that should alert people that something may be seriously wrong with a person, he explained to me. For example, a surgeon throws scalpels in the O.R., or a pilot bursts into uncontrolled rages in mid-flight. Yet, in case after case, such episodes are shrugged off. "He's a fine doctor," people will say, "but sometimes he has his moments."

Neff recognizes at least four types of behavioral sentinel events. There is persistent, poor anger control or abusive behavior. There is bizarre or erratic behavior. (He saw a doctor who could not get through the day without spending a couple of hours arranging and rearranging his desk. The doctor was found to have severe obsessive-compulsive disorder.) There is transgression of proper professional boundaries. (Neff once saw a family physician who was known to take young male patients out alone for dinner and, in one instance, on vacation with him. He turned out to have compulsive fantasies of sex with pubescent boys.) And there is the more familiar marker of incurring a disproportionate number of lawsuits or complaints (as Goodman had). Through his program, Neff has persuaded a substantial number of hospitals and clinics—and airlines and corporations—to take such events seriously. Many organizations have now specified, as a part of their contracts, that behavioral sentinel events could trigger an evaluation.

The essence of what he did, however, was simply provide a patient consultation, the way a cardiologist might provide a consultation about someone's chest pains. He examined the person sent to him, performed some tests, and gave a formal opinion about what was going on, about whether the person could safely be kept on the job, and about how things might be turned around. Neff was willing to do what everyone else was extremely reluctant to do: to judge (or, as he prefers to say, to "assess") a fellow-doctor. And he did it more thoroughly and dispassionately than a physician's colleagues ever could.

The week that I was there, Neff first gathered information on each of the three doctor-patients' cases. Starting on Monday morning, and through-

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SHOWCASE BY
DANA LIXENBERG

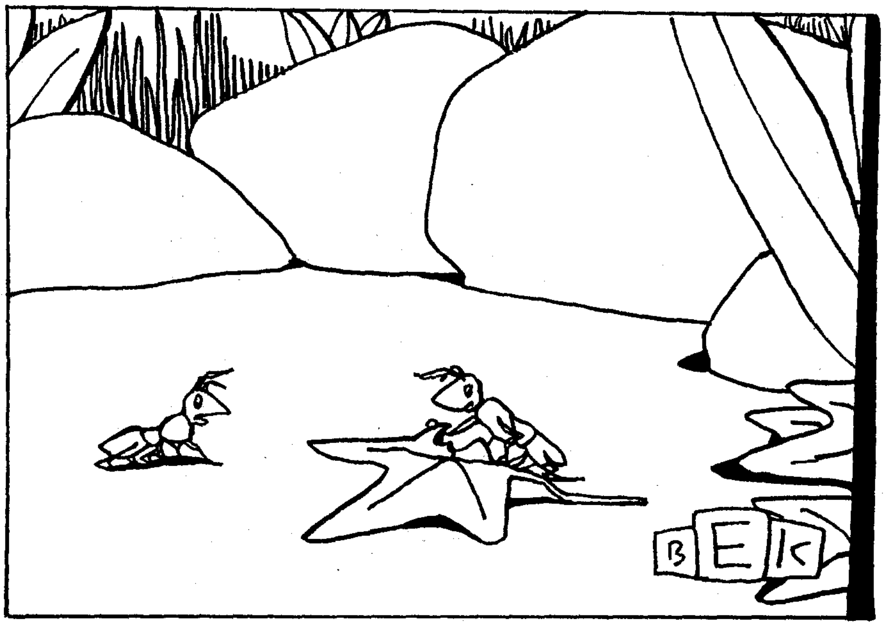
SMART SET

Nine years ago, when two Brooklyn kids—Keeth Smart and his sister Erinn—first walked into the New York Fencers' Club, they had no idea that learning how to fence would change their lives. "I didn't know a thing about it, other than the basics from 'Zorro,' " Keeth, who was twelve at the time, recalls. Erinn, who was ten, says, "I was attracted to the fact that you had to use footwork and handwork at the same time." Every week, and then every day, the Smarts returned to the club for lessons, and in 1998 Erinn won the women's foil title at the U.S. National Fencing Championship. This year, Keeth is the top-ranked American fencer in sabre. In September, they will represent the United States at the 2000 Olympic Games, in Sydney.

For most of its history, fencing has had an élite, whites-only following. The Smarts took up their weapons because of an earlier African-American trailblazer, Peter Westbrook, who started fencing at a Catholic boys' school in Newark in 1967 and went on to become a thirteen-time national champion and a six-time Olympian. Today, Westbrook runs a foundation that has introduced hundreds of inner-city kids to the sport, including the Smarts and their Olympic teammate Akhnaten Spencer-El.

Fencing demands tremendous stamina and agility, both physically and mentally, and Westbrook views it not as an end in itself but as one step toward a larger education. Even if the Smarts triumph in Sydney, they won't stick around to celebrate; academic obligations will bring them home before the closing ceremonies—Keeth to finish his senior year at St. John's University, in Queens, and Erinn to complete her junior year at Barnard. "I'd like to be there, of course," Erinn says. "But we can watch it on TV."

—*Ben Greenman*



"Oh, by the way, your three-o'clock got squashed."

out the next two days, he and four clinicians separately interviewed each of the doctors. They were made to tell their stories over and over again, half a dozen times or more, in order to break through their evasions and natural defensiveness, and to bring out the details. Before they arrived, Neff had put together a thick dossier on each of them. And during the week he called their colleagues to sort through contradictions and ambiguities.

Neff's patients also underwent a full exam, including blood work, to make sure that no physical illness could account for any dangerous behavior. (One doctor, who was sent to Neff after several episodes of freezing in place in mid-operation, was found to have advanced Parkinson's disease.) They were given drug testing. And they underwent psychological tests for everything from gambling addiction to paranoid schizophrenia.

On the last day, Neff assembled his team around a conference table in a drab little room to make their determinations. Meanwhile, the physicians waited in their rooms. The staff members spent about an hour reviewing the data in each case. Then, as a team, they made three separate decisions. First, they arrived at a diagnosis. Most doctors turned out to have a psychiatric illness—depression, bipolar disorder, drug or alcohol addiction, even outright psychosis. Almost without exception, the condition had never been diagnosed or treated. Others were simply struggling with stress, divorce, grief, illness, or the like. Next, the team decided whether the doctor was fit to return to practice. Neff showed me a typical report: "Due to his alcoholism, Dr. X cannot practice with reasonable skill and safety at this time." The judgment was always clear, unequivocal. Last, they spelled out specific recommendations for the doctor to follow. For some doctors deemed fit to return to practice, they recommended certain precautions: ongoing random drug testing, formal monitoring by designated colleagues, special restrictions on the doctor's practice. For those found unfit, Neff and his team typically specified a minimum period of time away from their practice, a detailed course of treatment, and explicit procedures for reëvaluation. At the end of the deliberations, they met with each doctor in Neff's office and described the final report that would be sent to his hospital or clinic. "People are usually surprised," Neff told me. "Ninety per cent find our recommendations more stringent than what they were expecting."

Neff reminded me more than once that his program provided only recommendations. But once he put his recommendations down on paper it was hard for hospitals and medical groups not to follow through and hold doctors to the plan. The virtue of Neff's approach was that once trouble occurred everything unfolded almost automatically: Minneapolis, evaluation, diagnosis, a plan. Colleagues no longer had to play judge and jury. And the troubled doctors got help. Neff and his team saved hundreds of careers from destruction—and possibly thousands of patients from harm.

Despite all Neff has accomplished, however, his program was shuttered within a few months of my visit. Although it had attracted wide interest across the country and had grown rapidly, the Professional Assessment Program had never quite paid its own way. In the end, Neff was unable to persuade Abbott Northwestern Hospital to continue to subsidize it. He is hoping to set up elsewhere.

But whether or not Neff succeeds, he has shown what can be done. A few similar programs have appeared in other cities. And on April 1st the Federation of State Medical Boards, together with the National Board of Medical Examiners, opened the Institute for Physician Evaluation, in Aurora, Colorado, the first of what the organizations hope will be a national network of assessment programs. The hard question—for doctors, and, even more, for their patients—is whether we can accept such an approach. A program like Neff's cuts a straightforward deal—maybe too straightforward. Physicians will turn in problematic colleagues—the ordinary, everyday bad doctors—only as long as the consequence is closer to diagnosis and treatment than to arrest and prosecution. And this requires that people be ready to view such doctors not as sociopaths but merely as flawed human beings. Neff's philosophy is, as he put it, "hard on behavior but soft on the person." People may actually prefer the world of don't ask, don't tell. Just ask yourself, could you abide by a system that rehabilitated drug-addicted anesthesiologists, cardiac surgeons with manic psychosis, or pediatricians with a thing for little girls if it meant catching more of them? Or, to put it another way, would you ever be ready to see Hank Goodman operate again?

Hank Goodman's life, and perhaps his career, was one of Kent Neff's saves. In mid-December of 1995, after pondering suicide, Goodman called Neff at his office. Goodman's lawyer had heard about the program and given him the number. Neff told him to come right away. Goodman made the trip the next day. They met for an hour, and at the end of the meeting Goodman remembers feeling that he could breathe again. Neff was direct and collegial and said that he could help him, that his life wasn't over. Goodman believed him.

He checked into the program the next week, paying for it himself. It was a difficult, at times confrontational, four days. He wasn't ready to admit all that he had done or to accept all that the members of Neff's team had found. The primary diagnosis was long-standing depression. Their conclusion was characteristically blunt: the doctor, they wrote, "is unable to practice safely now because of his major depression and will be unable to practice for an indefinite period of time." With adequate and prolonged treatment, the report said, "we would expect that he has the potential for a full return to practice." But the particular diagnostic labels they gave him are probably less important than the intervention itself: the act of telling him, with institutional authority, that something was wrong with him, that he must not practice, and that he might be able to do so again one day.

At Neff's suggestion, Goodman spent almost six months in psychiatric hospitals. After that, a local psychiatrist and a supervising medical doctor were lined up to monitor him at home. He was put on Prozac, and then Effexor. He stuck with the program. "The first year, I didn't care if I lived or died," he told me. "The second year, I wanted to live but I didn't want to go to work. The third year, I wanted to go back to work." Eventually, his local psychiatrist, his internist, and Neff all agreed that he was ready. Largely on their advice, Goodman's state medical board is allowing him to return to practice, although with restrictions. At first, he can work no more than twenty hours a week and only under supervision. He must see his psychiatrist and his medical doctor on a regular schedule. He cannot operate for at least six months after returning to the clinic. Then he would be able to operate only as an assistant until a reëvaluation determined that he could resume full privileges. He would also have to submit to random drug and alcohol tests.

But what practice will take him? His former partners wouldn't. "Too much baggage," he told me. He came very close to securing a place in the rural lake town where he has a vacation home. It has a small hospital, visited by forty-five thousand people during the summer months, and no orthopedic surgeon. The doctors there were aware of his previous problems, but, having searched for an orthopedist for years, they approved his arrival. Still, it took almost a year for him to obtain malpractice insurance. And he is now nervous about returning to the stresses of a full-fledged practice. He's decided to start off by doing physical examinations for an insurance company.

I recently visited Goodman at his home, a modest brick ranch-style house full of dogs and cats and birds, tchotchkes in the living room, and, in a corner of the kitchen, a computer and a library of orthopedic journals and texts on CD-ROMs. He was dressed in a polo shirt and khakis, and he seemed loose, unhurried, almost indolent. Except for the time he spent with his family, and on catching up on his field, he had little to occupy himself. His lifestyle could not be further from that of a surgeon. I tried to picture him in surgeon's greens again—in an O.R., with another patient on the phone with an infected knee. Who could say how it would go?

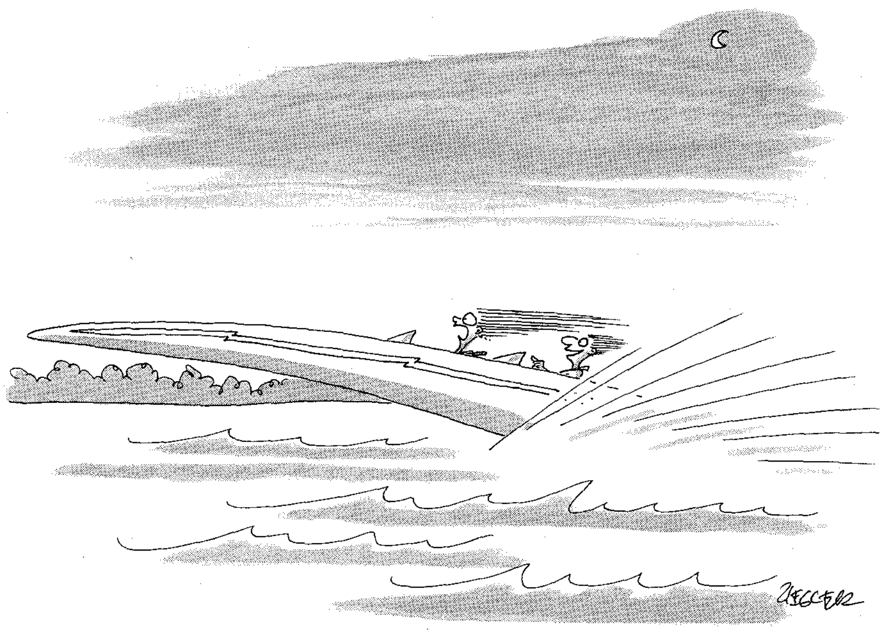
We had a meal together in town, and then drove around. Coming upon his former hospital, gleaming and modern, I asked him if I could have a look around. He didn't have to come, I said. He had not been inside the building more than two or three times in the previous four years. After a momentary hesitation, he decided to join me. We walked in through the sliding automatic doors and down a polished white hallway. A sunny voice rang out, and I could see that he regretted having come in.

"Why, Dr. Goodman!" a smiling, matronly, white-haired woman said from behind the information desk. "I haven't seen you in years. Where have you been?"

Goodman stopped short. He opened his mouth to answer, but for a long moment nothing came out. "I retired," he said finally.

She tilted her head, obviously puzzled: Goodman looked robust and twenty years younger than she was. Then I saw her eyes sharpen as she began to catch on. "Well, I hope you're enjoying it," she said, recovering nicely.

He made an uncomfortable remark about all the fishing he was getting to do. We began to walk away. Then he stopped and spoke to her again. "I'll be back, though," he said. ♦



"How's this for a romantic moonlit interlude?"

FICTION

FRIENDLY SKIES

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

JOHN SCHABEL, "PASSENGERS" #7, #12, #9 (1995)/PAUL MORRIS GALLERY

When the engine under the right wing began to unravel a thin skein of greasy, dark smoke, Ellen peered out the abraded Plexiglas window and saw the tufted clouds rising up and away from her and knew she was going to die. There was a thump from somewhere in the depths of the fuselage, the plane lurched like a balsawood toy struck by a rock, and the man in the seat in front of her lifted his head from the tray table and cried, "Mama!" in a thin, disconsolate wail. On went the "Fasten Seat Belts" sign. The murmur of the cabin became a roar. Every muscle in her body seized.

She thought distractedly of cradling her head—isn't that what you were supposed to do, cradle your head?—and then there was a burst of static, and the captain's voice was chewing calmly through the loudspeakers: "A little glitch there with engine No. 3, I'm afraid, folks. Nothing to worry about." The plane was obliterating the clouds with a supersonic howl, and every inanimate fold of metal and crease of plastic had come angrily to life, sloughed shoes, pieces of fruit, pretzels, paperback books, and handbags skittering by underfoot. Ellen stole a glance out the window: the smoke was dense now, as black and rich as the roiling billows rising from a ship torpedoed at sea, and stiff, raking fingers of yellow flame had begun to strangle the massive cylinder of the engine. The man in the seat next to hers—late twenties, with a brass stud centered half an inch beneath his lower lip, and hair the exact color and texture of meringue—turned a slack face to her. "What is that? Smoke?"

She was so frightened that she could only nod, her head filled with the sucking dull hiss of the air jets and the static of the speakers. The man leaned across her and squinted through the gray aperture of the window to the wing beyond. "Fuck, that's all we need. There's no way I'm going to make my connection now."

She didn't understand. Connection? Didn't he realize they were all going to die?

She braced herself and murmured a prayer. Voices rose in alarm. Her eyes felt as if they were going to implode in their sockets. But then the flames flickered and dimmed, and she felt the plane lifted up as if in the palm of some celestial hand, and for all the panic, the dimly remembered prayers, the cries and shouts, and the sudden, potent reek of urine, the crisis was over almost as soon as it had begun. "I hate to do this to you, folks," the captain drawled, "but it looks like we're going to have to turn around and take her back into LAX."

And now there was a collective groan. The man with the meringue hair let out a sharp, stinging curse and slammed the back of the seat in front of him with his fist. Not LAX. Not that. They'd already been delayed on the ground for two and a half hours because of mechanical problems, and then they'd sat on the runway for another forty minutes because they'd lost their slot for takeoff—or at least that's what the pilot had claimed. Everyone had got free drinks and peanuts, but nobody wanted peanuts, and the drinks tasted like nothing, like kerosene. Ellen had asked for a Scotch-and-soda—she was trying to pace herself, after sitting interminably at the airport bar nursing a beer that had gone stale and warm—but the man beside her and the woman in the aisle seat had both ordered doubles and flung them down wordlessly. "Shit!" the man cursed now, and slammed his fist into the seat again, pounding it as if it were a punching bag, until the man in front of him lifted a great, swollen dirigible of a head over the seat back and growled, "Give it a rest, asshole. Can't you see we got an emergency here?"

For a moment, she thought the man beside her was going to get up out of his seat and start something—he was certainly drunk enough—but, mercifully, the confrontation ended there. The plane rocked with the weight of the landing gear dropping into place, the big-headed man swivelled around and settled massively in his seat, and beyond the windows Los Angeles began to scroll back into view, a dull, brown grid sunk at the bottom of a muddy sea of air. "Did you hear that?" the man beside Ellen demanded of her. "Did you hear what he called me?"

Ellen sat gazing straight ahead, rigid as a catatonic. She could feel him staring at the side of her face. She could smell him. And everyone else, too. She narrowed her shoulders and emptied her lungs of air, as if she could collapse into herself, dwindle down to nothing, and disappear.

The man shifted heavily in his seat, muttering to himself now. "Courtesy," he spat, "common courtesy," over and over, as if it were the only phrase he knew. Ellen leaned her head back and shut her eyes.

There was the usual wait on the ground, the endless taxiing, the crush of the carry-on luggage, and the densely packed, boviform line creeping up the aisles and into the steel tube that fed the passenger terminal. Ellen inched along, her head down, shoulders slumped, her over-the-shoulder bag like a cannonball in a sling, and followed the crowd out into the seething arena of the terminal. She'd been up since five, climbing aboard the airport bus in the dark and sitting stiffly through the lurching hour-and-a-half trip in bumper-to-bumper traffic; she'd choked down a dry six-dollar bagel and three-fifty cup of espresso at one of the airport kiosks, and then there was the long wait for the delayed flight, the pawed-over newspapers, the mobbed rest room, and the stale beer. Now she was back where she'd started, and a flight agent was rewriting her ticket and shoving her in the direction of a distant gate, where she would hook up with the next flight out to Kennedy, where her mother would be waiting for her. Was it a direct flight? No, the agent was afraid not. She'd have a two-hour layover in Chicago, and she'd have to switch planes. On top of that, there was weather, a fierce winter storm raking the Midwest and creeping toward New York at a slow, sure pace that was almost certain to coincide with her arrival.

She moved through the corridors like an automaton, counting off the gates as she passed them. The terminal was undergoing renovation—perpetually, it seemed—and up ahead plywood walls narrowed the corridors to cattle chutes. There was raw concrete underfoot here, and everything had a film of dust on it. She looked anxiously to the bottleneck ahead—she had only ten minutes to make the flight—and she was just shifting the bag from her left shoulder to her right when she was jostled from behind. Or not simply jostled—if it hadn't been for the woman in front of her, she would have lost her footing on the uneven surface and gone down in a heap. She glanced up to see the man who'd been sitting beside her on the aborted flight hurrying past—what should she call him? Stud Lip? Meringue Head?—even as she braced herself against the woman and murmured, "Excuse me, I'm so sorry." The man never gave her so much as a glance, let alone a word of apology. On he went, a pair of shoulders in some sort of athletic jacket, the bulb of his head in the grip of his hair, a bag too big for the overhead compartment swinging like a weapon at his side.

She saw him again at the gate—at the front of the line, a head taller than anyone else—and what was he doing? There were at least twenty people ahead of her, and the flight was scheduled to depart in three minutes. He was just standing there, immovable, waving his ticket in the attendant's face and gesticulating angrily at his bag. Ellen wasn't a violent person—she was thirty-two years old, immured in the oubliette of a perpetual diet, with limp blond hair, a plain face, and two milky blue eyes that oozed sympathy and regret—but if she could have thrown a switch that would put an instant, sizzling end to Meringue Head's existence, she wouldn't have hesitated. "What do you mean, I have to check it?" he demanded, in a voice that was like the thumping of a mallet.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Lercher," the man behind the desk was saying, "but federal regulations require—"

"Ler*share*, you idiot, Ler*share*—didn't you ever take French? And fuck the regulations. I've already been held up for two and a half hours and damn near killed when the goddam engine caught fire, and you're trying to tell me I can't take my bag on the airplane, for Christ's sake?"

The other passengers hung their heads, consulted their watches, worked their jaws frantically over thin bands of flavorless gum, the people-movers moved people, the loudspeakers crackled, and the same inane voices repeated endlessly the same inane announcements in English and in Spanish. Ellen felt faint. Or no, she felt nauseated. It was as if there were something crawling up her throat and trying to get out, and all she could think of was the tarantula creeping through the clear plastic tubes of the terrarium in the classroom she'd left behind for good.

Waldo, the kids had called it, after the "Where's Waldo?" puzzles that had swept the fifth graders into a kind of frenzy for a month or two until something else—some computer game she couldn't remember the name of—had superseded them. She'd never liked the big, lazy spider, the slow, stalwart creep of its legs and abdomen as it patrolled its realm seeking out the crickets it fed on, the alien look of it, like a severed hand moving all on its own. It's harmless, the assistant principal had assured her, but when Tommy Ayala sneaked a big, dun trap-door spider into school and dropped it into the terrarium, Waldo had reacted with a swift and deadly ferocity. A lesson had come of that—about animal behavior and territoriality, and nearly every child had a story of cannibalistic guppies or killer hamsters to share—but it wasn't a happy lesson. Lucy Fadel brought up road rage, and Jasmyn Dickers knew a teen-ager who was stabbed in the neck because he had to live in a converted garage with twelve other people, and somebody else had been bitten by a pit bull, and on and on and on. Fifth graders. Ten years of fifth graders.

"Chicago passengers only," a flight attendant was saying, and the line melted away as Ellen found herself in yet another steel tube, her heart racing still over the image of that flaming engine and the fatal certainty that had gripped her like the death of everything. Was it an omen? Was she crazy to get on this flight? And what of the prayer she'd murmured—where had that come from? *Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* Prayers were for children, and for the old and hopeless, and she'd grown up to discover that they were addressed not to some wise and recumbent God on high but to the cold gaps between the stars. *Pray for us, now and at the hour of our*—

Up ahead, she saw the open door of the plane, rivets, the thin steel sheet of its skin, flight attendants in their blue uniforms and arrested smiles, and then she was shuffling down the awkward aisle like a mismatched bride—"The overhead bins are for secondary storage only. . . . A very full flight . . . Your coöperation, please"—and she was murmuring another sort of prayer now, a more common and profane one: *Christ, don't let me sit next to that idiot again.*

She glanced down at her boarding pass—18B—and counted off the rows, so tired, suddenly, that she felt as if she had been drained of blood. ("Anemic," the doctor had said, clucking her tongue, that was the problem, that and depression.) The line had come to a halt, Ellen's fellow-passengers slumped under the weight of their bags like penitents, and all she could see down the length of the aisle was their shoulders, their collars, and the hair that sprouted from their heads in all its multiethnic variety. The lucky ones—the ones already settled in their seats—gazed up at her with irritation, as if she were responsible for the delays, as if she had personally spun out the weather system over the Midwest, put the lies in the pilots' mouths, and flouted the regulations for carry-ons. "All right, all right, give me a minute, will you?" a voice raged out, and through a gap in the line she saw him, six or seven rows down, blocking the aisle as he fought to stuff his bag into the overhead compartment. Force, that was all he could think to use, because he was spoiled, bullying, petulant, like an overgrown fifth grader. She hated him. Everyone on the plane hated him.

And then the flight attendant was there, assuring him that she would find a place for his bag up front, even as an amplified voice hectored them to take their seats and the engines rumbled to life. Ellen caught a glimpse of his face, blunt and oblivious, as he swung ponderously into his seat, and then the line shuffled forward and she saw that her prayer had been answered—she was three rows ahead of him. She'd been assigned a middle seat, of course, as had most of the passengers bumped from the previous flight, but at least it wasn't a middle seat beside him. She waited as the woman in the aisle seat (mid-fifties, with a saddlebag face and a processed pouf of copper hair) unfastened her seat belt and laboriously rose to make way for her. There was no one in the window seat—not yet, at least—and even as she settled in, elbow to elbow with the saddlebag woman, Ellen was already coveting it.

Could she be so lucky? No, no, she couldn't, and here was another layer of superstition rising up out of the murk of her subconscious, as if luck had anything to do with her or what she'd been through already today or in the past week or month or year—or, for that matter, through the whole course of her vacant and constricted life. A name came to her lips then, a name she'd been trying, with the help of the prescription the doctor had given her, to suppress. She held it there for a moment, enlarged by her grief until she felt like the heroine of some weepy movie, a raped nun, an airman's widow, sloe-eyed and wilting under the steady gaze of the camera. She shouldn't have had the beer, she told herself. Or the Scotch, either. Not with the pills.

The plane quieted. The aisles cleared. She fought down her exhaustion and kept her eyes fixed on the far end of the aisle, where the last passenger—a boy in a reversed baseball cap—was fumbling into his seat. Surreptitiously, with her feet only, she shifted her bag from the space under her seat to the space beneath the window seat, and then, after a moment, she unfastened her seat belt and slipped into the unoccupied seat. She stretched her legs, adjusted her pillow and blanket, watched the flight attendants work their way up the aisle, easing shut the overhead bins. She was thinking that she should have called her mother with the new flight information—she'd call her from Chicago, that's what she'd do—when there was movement at the front of the plane and one final passenger came through the door, even as the attendants stood by to screw it shut. Stooping to avoid the TV monitors, he came slowly down the aisle, sweeping his eyes right and left to check the row numbers, an overcoat over one arm, a soft computer bag slung over the opposite shoulder. He was dressed in a sports coat and a T-shirt, his hair cut close, after the fashion of the day, and his face seemed composed despite what must have been a mad dash through the airport. But what mattered most about him was that he seemed to be coming straight to her, to 18A, the seat she'd appropriated. And what went through her mind? A curse, that was all. Just a curse.

Sure enough, he paused at Row 18, glanced at the saddlebag woman, and then at Ellen, and said, "Excuse me, I believe I'm in here?"

Ellen reddened. "I thought . . ."

"No, no," he said, holding Ellen's eyes even as the saddlebag woman rolled up and out of her seat like a rock dislodged from a crevice, "stay there. It's O.K. Really."

The pilot said something then, a garble of the usual words, the fuselage shuddered, and the plane backed away from the gate with a sudden jolt. Ellen put her head back and closed her eyes.

She woke when the drinks cart came around. There was a sour taste in her mouth, her head was throbbing, and the armrest gouged at her ribs as if it had come alive. She'd been dreaming about Roy, the man who had dismembered her life like a boy pulling the legs off an insect, Roy and that elaborate, humiliating scene in the teachers' lounge, her mother there somehow to witness it, and then she and Roy were in bed, the stiff insistence of his erection (which turned out to be the armrest), and his hand creeping across her rib cage until it was Waldo, Waldo the tarantula, closing in on her breast. "Something to drink?" the broad-faced flight attendant was asking, and both Ellen's seatmates seemed to be hanging on her answer. "Scotch-and-soda," she said, without giving it a second thought.

The man beside her, the new man, the one who had offered up his seat to her, was working on his laptop, the gentle blue glow of the screen softly illuminating his lips and eyes. He looked up at the flight attendant, his fingers still poised over the keys, and murmured, "May I have a Chardonnay, please?" Then it was the saddlebag woman's turn. "Sprite," she said, the dull thump of her voice swallowed up in the drone of the engines.

The man flattened himself against the seat back as the flight attendant leaned in to pass Ellen her drink, then he typed something hurriedly, shut down the computer, and slipped it into his lap, beneath the tray table. He took the truncated bottle, the glass, napkin, and peanuts from the attendant, arranged them neatly before him, and turned to Ellen with a smile. "I never know where to put my elbows on these things," he said, shrinking away from the armrest they shared. "It's kind of like being in a coffin—or one of those medieval torture devices, you know what I mean?"

Ellen took a sip of her drink and felt the hot smoke of the liquor in the back of her throat. He was good-looking, handsome—more than handsome. At that moment, the engines thrumming, the flat, dull earth fanning out beneath the plane, he was shining and beautiful, as radiant as an archangel come flapping through the window to roost beside her. Not that it would matter to her. Roy was handsome, too, but she was done with handsome, done with fifth graders, done with the whole failed experiment of living on her own in the big, smoggy, palm-shrouded city. Turn the page, new chapter. "Or maybe a barrel," she heard herself say, "going over Niagara Falls."

"Yeah," he said, laughing through his nose. "Only in the barrel you don't get your own personal flotation device."

Ellen didn't know what to say to that. She took another pull at her drink for lack of anything better to do. She was feeling it, no doubt about it, but what difference would it make if she were drunk or sober as she wandered the labyrinthine corridors of O'Hare, endlessly delayed by snow, mechanical failure, the hordes of everybody going everywhere? Three sheets to the wind, right—isn't that what they said? And what, exactly, did that mean? Some old sailing expression, she supposed, something from the days of the clipper ships, when you vomited yourself from one place to another.

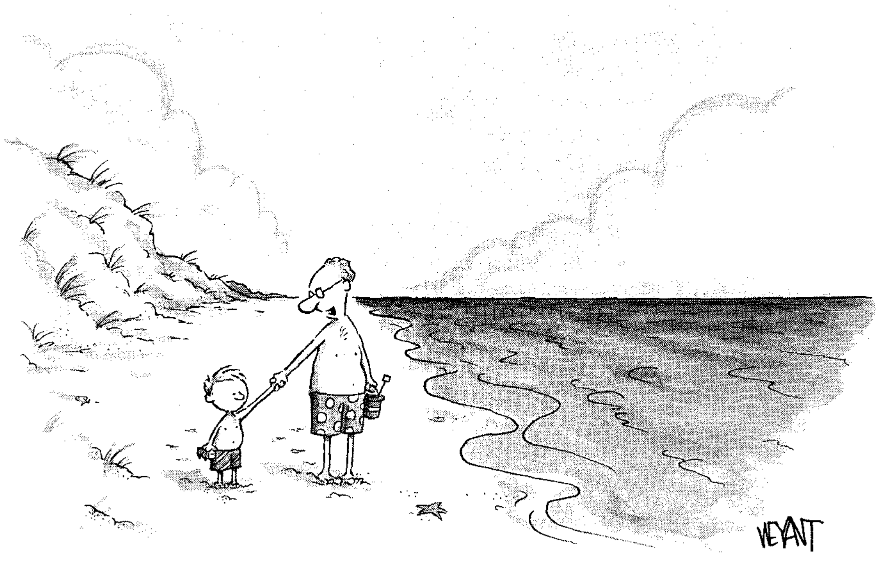
Their meals had come. The broad-faced flight attendant was again leaning in confidentially, this time with the eternal question—"Chicken or pasta?"—on her lips. Ellen wasn't hungry—food was the last thing she wanted—but on an impulse she turned to her neighbor. "I'm not really very hungry," she said, her face too close to his, their elbows touching, his left knee rising up out of the floor like a stanchion, "but if I get a meal, would you want it—or some of it? As an extra, I mean?"

He gave her a curious look, then said, "Sure, why not?" The flight attendant was waiting, the sealed-in smile beginning to crack at the corners with the first fidgeting of impatience. "Chicken for me," the man said, "and pasta for the lady." And then, to Ellen, as he shifted the tray from one hand to the other: "You sure, now? I know it's not exactly three-star cuisine, but you've got to eat, and the whole reason they feed you is to make the time pass so you don't realize how cramped and miserable you are."

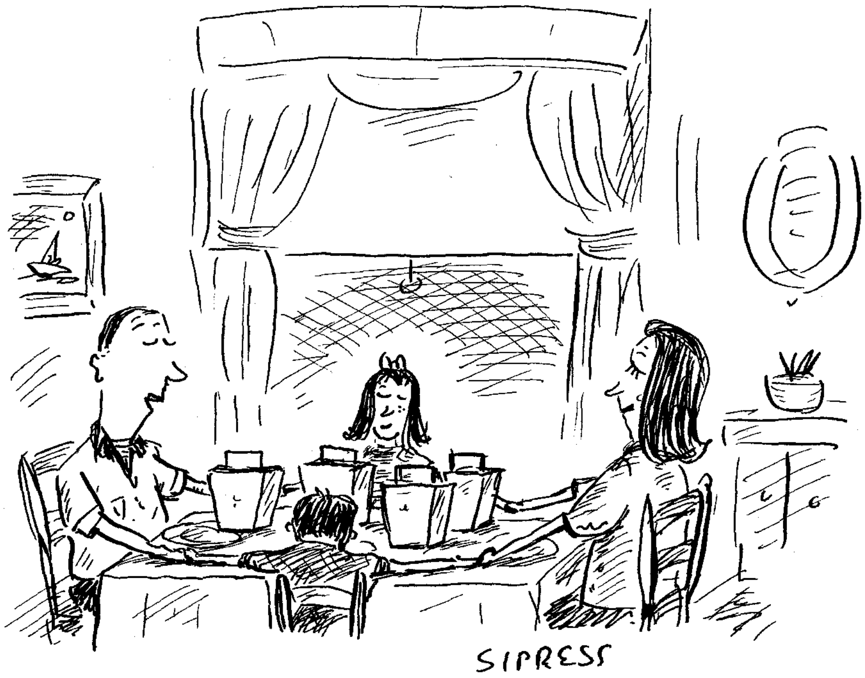
The smell of the food—salt, sugar, and animal fat made palpable—rose to her nostrils, and she felt nauseous again. Was it the pills? The alcohol? Or was it Roy—Roy, and life itself? She thought about that, and the instant she did, there he was—Roy—clawing his way back into her mind. She could see him now, his shoulders squared in his black polyester suit with the little red flecks in it—the suit she'd helped him pick out, as if he had any taste or style he could call his own—his eyes swollen out of their sockets, his lips reduced to two thin, ungenerous flaps of skin grafted to his mouth. *Shit-for-brains.* That's what he'd called her, right there in the teachers' lounge with everybody watching—Lynn Bendall and Lauren McGimpsey and that little teacher's aide, what was her name? He was shouting, and she was shouting back, no holds barred, not anymore. *So what if I am sleeping with her? What's it to you? You think you own me? Do you? Huh, shit-for-brains? Huh?* Lauren's face was dead, but Ellen saw Lynn exchange a smirk with the little teacher's aide, and that smirk said it all, because Lynn, it seemed, knew more about whom he was sleeping with than Ellen did herself.

The man beside her—her neighbor—was eating now. He was hungry, and that was good. She felt saintly, watching him eat and listening to him chatter on about his work—he was some sort of writer or journalist, on his way to Philadelphia for the holidays. She'd renounced the pasta and given it to him, and he was grateful—he hadn't eaten all day, and he was a growing boy, he said, with a smile, though he must have been in his early thirties. And unmarried, judging from his naked fingers. When the drinks cart came by, Ellen ordered another Scotch.

They were talking about movies, maybe the only subject people had in common these days, when Ellen glanced up to see Lercher, his face twisted in a drunken scowl, looming over them as he made his unsteady way to the forward lavatories. She and her companion—his name was Michael, just Michael, that was all he offered—had struck a real chord when it came to the current cinema (no movies with explosions, no alien life-forms, no geriatric lovers, no sappy kids), and she'd begun to feel something working inside her. She was interested, genuinely interested in something, for maybe the first time in months. Mi-



"That's not white noise. That's the ocean."



"And God bless Mr. Chu's Szechuan Palace."

• •

chael. She held the name on her tongue like the thinnest wafer, repeating it silently, over and over. And then it came to her: he was the anti-Roy, that's who he was, so polite and unassuming, a soulmate, somebody who could care, really care—she was sure of it.

"You see that man?" she asked, lowering her voice. "The one with the hair? He was sitting right next to me on the last flight, the one where, well, I was telling you, I was looking out the window and the engine caught fire? And I've never been so scared in my life."

The wind shrieked along the length of the fuselage, the lights dimmed and went up again, Michael poured himself a second glass of wine and made sympathetic noises. "You actually saw this? Flames? Or was it like sparks or something?"

She went cold with the memory of it. "Flames," she said, pursing her lips and nodding her head. "I was so scared I started praying." She glanced out the window, as if to reassure herself. "You're not religious, are you?" she said, turning back to him.

"No," he said, and he raised his hand to cut the throat of the subject before it could take hold of him. "I'm an atheist. I mean, we had no set religion in our house, that's just the way my parents were."

"Me, too," she said, remembering religious instruction, the icy dip of the holy water, her mother in a black veil, and the priest intoning the sleepy immemorial phrases of her girlhood, "but we went to church when I was little."

He didn't ask what church, and a silence fell between them as the plane rocked gently and the big man oscillated back from the lavatory. Ellen closed her eyes again, for just a moment, the swaying of the cabin, and the pills and the Scotch, pulling her down toward some inky-dark place that was like the mouth of an abandoned well, like a cave deep in the earth. . . .

She was startled awake by a sudden explosion of voices behind her. "The fuck I will!" snarled a man's voice, and even through the fog of her waking she recognized it.

"But, sir, I've already told you, the plane is full. You can see for yourself."

"Then put me up front—and don't try to tell me that's full, because I was up there to use the rest room, and there's all sorts of space up there. This is bullshit. I'm not going to sit here squeezed in like a rat. I paid full fare, and I'm not going to take this shit anymore, you hear me?"

Heads had begun to turn. Ellen glanced at Michael, but he was absorbed with his computer, some message she couldn't read, some language she didn't know; for a moment she stared at the ranks of dark symbols floating across the dull firmament of the screen, then she craned her neck to see over the seat back. Lercher was standing in the aisle, his shoulders hunched, his head cocked forward against the low ceiling. Two flight attendants, the broad-faced woman and another, slighter woman with her hair in a neat French braid, stood facing him.

"There's nothing we can do, sir," the slight woman said, an edge of hostility in her voice. "I've already told you, you don't qualify for an upgrade. Now, I'm going to have to ask you to take your seat."

"This is bullshit," he reiterated. "Two and a half fucking hours on the ground, and then we get sent back to LAX, and now I'm stuck in this cattle car, and you won't even serve me a fucking drink? Huh? What do you call this?" He flailed his arms, appealing to the people seated around him; to a one, they looked away. "Well, I call it bullshit!" he roared.

The women held their ground. "Sit down, sir. Now. Or we'll have to call the captain."

The big man's face changed. The crease between his eyes deepened; his lips drew back as if he were about to spit down the front of the first woman's crisp blue jacket. "All right," he said ominously, "if that's how you want to play it," and he was already swinging around and staggering toward the rear of the plane, the flight attendants trailing along helplessly in his wake. Ellen shifted in her seat so she could follow their progress, her hips straining against the seat belt, her right hand inadvertently braced against Michael's forearm. "Oh, I'm sorry," she murmured, even as Lercher disappeared into the galley at the rear and she turned her face to Michael's. He looked startled, his eyes so blue and electric they reminded her of the fish in the classroom aquarium—the neon tetras, with their bright lateral stripes. "Did you see that? I mean, did you hear him—the man, the one I was telling you about?"

He hesitated a moment, just staring into her eyes. "No," he said finally, "I didn't notice. I was—I guess I was so absorbed in my work I didn't know where I was."

Ellen's face darkened. "He's the worst kind of trash," she said. "Just mean, that's all, like the bullies on the playground."

And now there was the sound of a commotion from the rear of the plane, and Ellen turned to see Lercher emerge from the galley on the far side of the plane, the flight attendants cowering behind him. In each hand he wielded a gleaming stainless-steel coffeepot, and he was moving rapidly up the aisle, his eyes gone hard with hate. "Out of my way!" he screamed, elbowing a tottering old lady aside. "Anybody fucks with me gets scalded, you hear me?"

People awoke with a snort. A hundred heads ducked down protectively, and on every face was an expression that said *not now, not here, not me.* No one said a word. And then, suddenly, a male flight attendant came hurtling down the aisle from the first-class section and attempted to tackle the big man, gripping him around the waist, and Ellen heard a woman cry out as hot coffee streamed down the front of her blouse. Lercher held his ground, bludgeoning the flight attendant to the floor with the butt of the wildly splashing pot he clutched in his right fist, and then the two female attendants were on him, tearing at his arms, and a male passenger, heavyset and balding, sprang savagely up out of his seat to enter the fray.

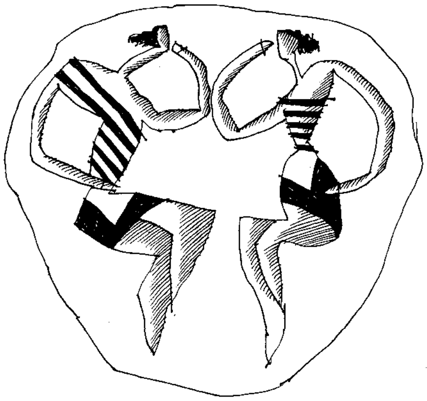
For a moment, they achieved a sort of equilibrium, surging forward and falling back again, but Lercher was too much for them. He stunned the heavyset man with a furious, slashing blow, then flung off the flight attendants as if they were nothing. The scalded woman screamed again, and Ellen felt as if a knife were twisting inside her. She couldn't breathe. Her arms went limp. Lercher was dancing in the aisle, shouting obscenities, moving backward now, toward the galley, and God only knew what other weapons he might find back there.

Where was the captain? Where were the people in charge? The cabin was in an uproar, babies screaming, voices crying out, movement everywhere—and Lercher was in the galley, dismantling the plane, and no one could do anything about it. There was the crash of a cart being overturned, a volley of shouts, and suddenly he appeared at the far end of Ellen's aisle, his face contorted until it was no human face at all. "Die!" he screamed. "Die, you motherfuckers!" The rear exit door was just opposite him, and he paused in his fury to kick at it with a big, booted foot, and then he was hammering at the Plexiglas window with one of the coffeepots as if he could burst through it and sail on out into the troposphere like some sort of human missile.

"You're all going to die!" he screamed, pounding, pounding. "You'll be sucked out into space, all of you!" Ellen thought she could hear the window cracking—wasn't anybody going to do anything?—and then he dropped both coffeepots and made a rush up the aisle for the first-class section.

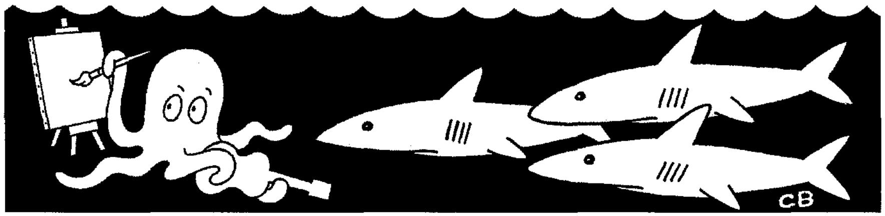
Before she could react, Michael rose in a half-crouch, swung his laptop out across the saddlebag lady's tray table, and caught Lercher in the crotch with the sharp, flying corner of it. She saw his face then, Lercher's, twisted and swollen like a sore, and it came right at Michael, who could barely maneuver in his eighteen inches of allotted space. In a single motion, the big man snatched the laptop from Michael's hand and brought it whistling down across his skull, and Ellen felt him go limp beside her. At that point, she didn't know what she was doing. All she knew was that she'd had enough, enough of Roy and this big, drunken, testosterone-addled bully and the miserable, crimped life that awaited her at her mother's, and she came up out of her seat as if she'd been launched—and in her hand, clamped there like a flaming sword, was a thin steel fork that she must have plucked from the cluttered dinner tray. She went for his face, for his head, his throat, enveloping him with her body, the drug singing in her heart and the Scotch flowing like ichor in her veins.

They made an emergency stop in Denver, and they sat on the ground in a swirling light snow as the authorities boarded the plane to take charge of Lercher. He'd been overpowered finally, and bound to his seat with cloth napkins from the first-class dining service, a last napkin crammed into his mouth as a gag. The captain had come on the loudspeaker with a mouthful of apologies, and then, to a feeble cheer from the cabin, pledged free headphones and drinks on the house for the rest of the flight. Ellen sat, dazed, over yet another Scotch, the seat beside her vacant. Even before the men in uniforms boarded the plane to handcuff and shackle Lercher, the paramedics had rushed down the aisle to evacuate poor Michael to the nearest hospital, and she would never forget the way his eyes had rolled back in his head as they laid him out on the stretcher. And Lercher, big and bruised, his head drunkenly bowed and the dried blood painted across his cheek where the fork had gone in and gone in again, as if she'd been carving a roast with a dull knife, Lercher led away like Billy Tindall or Lucas Lopez in the grip of the principal on a bad day at La Cumbre Elementary.



She sipped her drink, her face gone numb, eyes focussed on nothing, as the whole plane murmured in awe. People stole glances at her, the saddlebag woman offered up her personal copy of the January *Cosmopolitan*, the captain himself came back to pay homage. And the flight attendants—they were so relieved they were practically genuflecting to her. It didn't matter. Nothing mattered. There would be forms to fill out, a delay in Chicago, an uneventful flight into New York, eight hours behind schedule. Her mother would be there, with a face full of pity and resignation, and she'd be too delicate to mention Roy, or teaching, or any of the bleak details of the move itself, the waste of a new microwave, and all that furniture tossed in a Dumpster. She would smile, and Ellen would try to smile back. "Is that it?" her mother would say, eying the bag slung over her shoulder. "You must have some baggage?" And then, as they were heading down the carpeted corridor, two women caught in the crush of humanity, with the snow spitting outside and the holidays coming on, her mother would take her by the arm, smile up at her, and just to say something, anything, would ask, "Did you have a nice flight?" ♦

THE CRITICS



THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE FAT OF THE LAND

Living large with a professor and a philanderer.

BY ANTHONY LANE

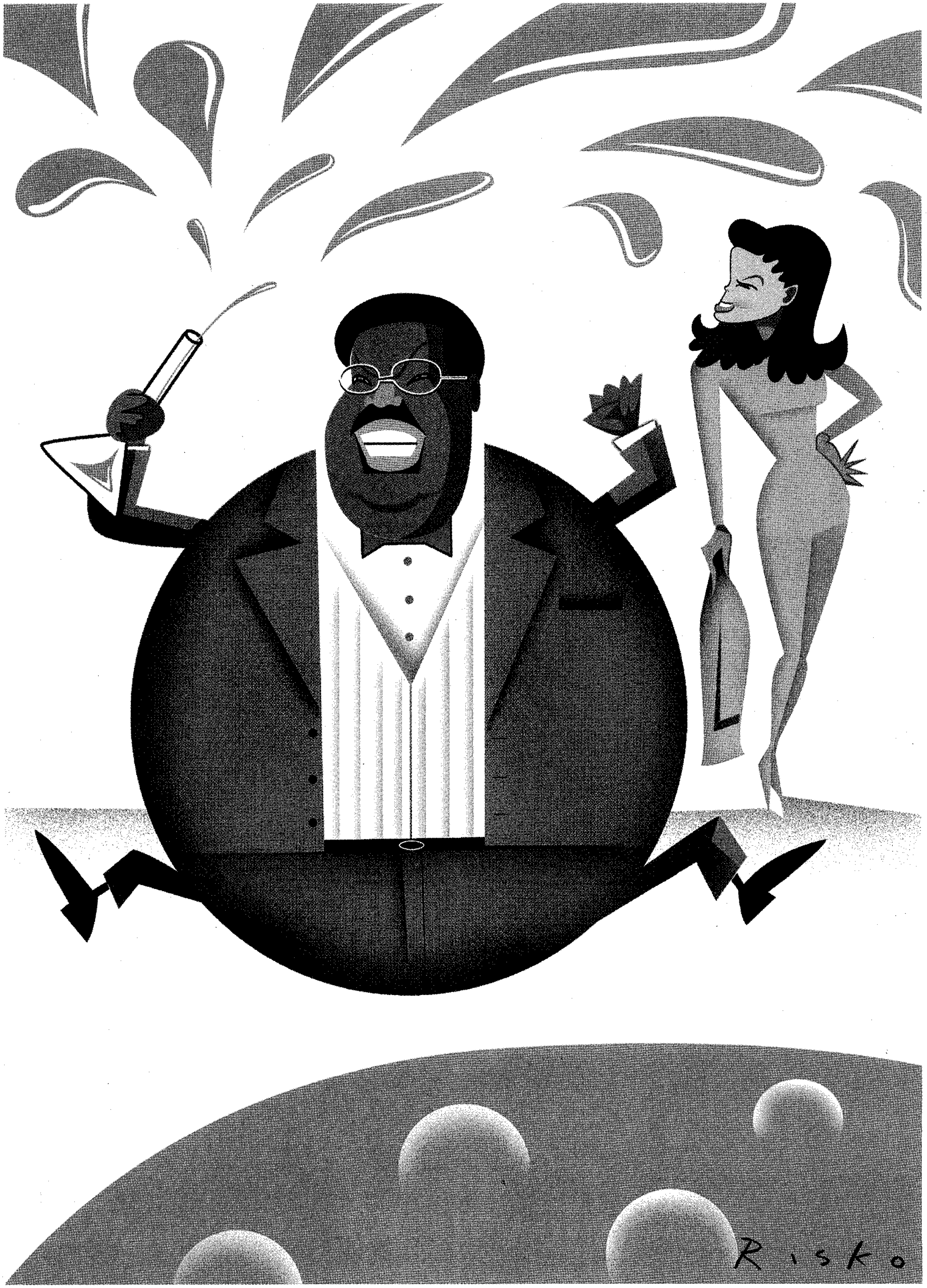
I am not convinced that the world needs a sequel to Eddie Murphy's "The Nutty Professor," which was itself a rehash of the Jerry Lewis version, of 1963. But there is money in Murphy, and that is why discerning *cinéastes* across America are being offered "The Klumps" for their viewing pleasure. As with the first installment, Murphy plays half a dozen characters, all of them members of the same family. There is Sherman Klump, the portly scientist, together with his brother, his father, and his wearily well-mannered mother; there is his leering grandma, with her false teeth and authentic libido; and there is Buddy Love, who is a kind of id savant to Sherman's milky, innocent ego. A few other actors sidle shyly into the frame, finding a little space to perform in the shadow of the Murphy circus: Janet Jackson is Sherman's beloved, and Larry Miller is his mean-mouthed boss, whose comeuppance involves being raped by a giant hamster. I find it hard to describe the texture of this movie; let us just say that comedy has moved on since the days of Noël Coward.

Grossness is certainly the chosen flavor of the new millennium; if you scan the credits of "The Klumps," the names that spring out are not those of Peter Segal, the director, or even of Jerry Lewis, who is an executive producer, but those of Paul and Chris Weitz, who so recently charmed us with "American Pie." The problem with the broad, below-the-waist farce of today is not that it will offend delicate sensibilities—remember them?—but that it's not offensive enough. The great scatologists, from Rabelais to Rowlandson, followed the logic of excess to its disgusting conclusions, in a bid to flush political and ecclesiastical toxins from the body politic; theirs was a physical assault on the mismanagement of souls. A film like "The Klumps" is a battalion of special effects in search of an enemy; the editing is almost unwatchably frantic, chopping back and forth between one Murphy incarnation and the next, as if the sheer fervor of silliness could persuade us, as the Marx Brothers used to do, that points are being scored. But nothing hits home; like Sherman, the movie is mostly wind.

Oddly enough, this was not the case with "The Nutty Professor," in which Murphy made the canny decision to attack himself. The Klump clan was then a mere sideshow (and that is what it should have remained); the spotlight was on Buddy Love, who represented all the jive-talking, skirt-chasing disdain that had oiled the triumphal progress of the Murphy show, from the days of "48 Hrs" and "Beverly Hills Cop." You need wit and nerve, as well as a perverse narcissism, to turn on yourself in public, and "The Nutty Professor" pointed the way to Steve Martin's "Bowfinger," where Murphy took an axe to his personality and cleaved it perfectly in two—the gentle goof and the raging star. This makes "The Klumps" an even more disconsolate experience—a seven-league backward step, in which Buddy Love barely registers, and which invites us to do nothing but acclaim Murphy and his variety act. The result is the polar opposite of a work such as "Kind Hearts and Coronets," in which Alec Guinness played eight or nine roles—I always lose count, because he disappears into them like a magician's rabbit slipping back into its hat. Guinness was coldly grateful for the anonymity that was vouchsafed by a one-man crowd, whereas Murphy seems to say, Look at me, and me, and all the other me's—the thrill of the human six-pack.

There may, I regret to inform you, be worse to come; rumor has it that Robin Williams is to remake "Kind Hearts and Coronets"—a strange decision, given that there were no ailing children in the original. In their day, Williams and Murphy were the best stand-up comedians in the land; movies have stroked their vanity, loosened their jolting connection with an audience, and, in Murphy's case, coarsened the nimbleness of his posturing. "The Klumps" left me more uneasy than ever, as Papa Klump sat there at the dinner table singing out lines like "Hallelujah Yankee Doodle!" Murphy knows full well that he is toying with images of blackness, but he should also remember that postmodern games mean perilously little in the multiplex; there were people in the theatre roaring at sights that would have flattered the prejudices of their grandparents. Judging by this film, we have a good idea of what can occur to Murphy's body—baldness, belching, a Falstaffian ballooning of the gut—but what on earth is going on in his head? How does he think this eye-rolling, tongue-lolling parade of appetites will play in the gallery? Half of the strongest actors in Hollywood, starting with Morgan Freeman and Denzel Washington, happen to be black; does Murphy wonder what they will make of this minstreling? Peter Segal's picture is dimly plotted and horribly shot, and I tasted loathing in the whole endeavor; it is not impossible that Murphy is at once feeding us what we like and despising us for swallowing it. The bitter-

ROBERT RISKO



Peter Segal's "The Klumps" invites us to do nothing but acclaim Eddie Murphy and his variety act.

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ness doesn't stop there. "The Klumps" may be a vanity project, but it also bears the traces of a man who hates himself.

Tubbiness of a more gentle type looms over "The Tao of Steve." In Jenniphr Goodman's first full-length picture, the central role of Dex is played by Donal Logue, or, rather, by Donal Logue's stomach. His tussock of hair has plenty to do, and his daft and slightly dazed smile—the smile of W. C. Fields on a Leave Your Malice at Home Day—gets a couple of good scenes, but this is basically a belly flick. Dex is an industrious slacker, if you can conceive of such a thing, and he has both the temper and the circumference of a man who has pondered earthly existence and settled on the path of true indolence. "Doing stuff is overrated," he says, and proves his claim by sitting outside with a beer and a book, or by spraying whipped cream into the moist jaws of his yellow Labrador. This makes them both very happy.

Happiness is a curious commodity in Goodman's film. Sometimes it can be planned as neatly as a chess move; at other times it droppeth like the gentle rain upon the fat guy beneath. The action starts at a college reunion, and Dex personally celebrates the occasion by humping a married woman against the groaning bookshelves of the library—the philosophy shelf, to be exact, which is where the trouble starts. Ten years after the end of his formal education, Dex is still enlisting the help of the world's great thinkers in his quest to get laid. I may be wrong, but research suggests that "The Tao of Steve" may be the first movie in history that actively promotes the work of Kierkegaard as a sexual aid. Against all odds, Dex is a ladies' man; even at the reunion, a cluster of his fellow-students stand there smirking at the memory of his prowess. As Dex explains to Dave (Kimo Wills), his friend and stooge, one should honor the ancient example of Lao-tzu and eliminate all desire; that way, she won't even suspect that you're coming on to her. Only thus can one hope to become a total Steve.

A Steve—think McQueen, think McGarrett from "Hawaii Five-O"—is hard to define, but it probably entails fulfilling your desire without breaking sweat. Steve is "the prototypical cool American guy," declares Dex, although, looking at him and his pals, you begin to wonder. After all, these are Santa Fe folk whose idea of fun consists of spinning Frisbees at a small pile of rocks; to someone like Syd—played by Greer Goodman, the director's sister—they must veer dangerously close to nerdhood. If the movie has a plot, it is the story of Dex's swelling infatuation with Syd, who designs opera sets and plays the drums—"banging on the old skins," as Dex calls it. His interest in Syd, though intense, can hardly be exclusive, as he makes clear: "Am I supposed to remain celibate while I bask in the warm glow of your annihilating contempt?"

That light, literate skitter of dialogue is the best thing about the movie; the worst thing is the courtesy, or the cowardice, with which it betrays its golden rule. Philandering is such a crunchy subject for any movie, but you need to keep faith with its core of heartlessness, and to find some structure for the rolling body count racked up by the serious conquistador; even François Truffaut, a man who loved women, dulled down badly in "The Man Who Loved Women." I hoped that Dex, in the glory of his lardiness, would be something new—a stoned American answer to Marcello Mastroianni, perhaps, the great European sad sack who couldn't believe his luck. Regrettably, we are never really privileged to watch Dex at work, and his principal target turns out to be the philanderer's nightmare: true love. He and Syd discuss "Don Giovanni," but Mozart hurried his hero toward hellfire, whereas these two wind up as an item, and the camera keeps casting yucky glances at moonrise and sunsets. "Romantic love is our national religion," we learn, in which case you can't help wishing that "The Tao of Steve"—sweet and fumbling though it is, and blessed with the most cheering of soundtracks—had summoned the courage to blaspheme. It's a breeze, but it could have been Stever still. ♦

CORRECTION OF THE WEEK
From the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Elmer Fudd was mistakenly identified as Porky Pig in a photo caption on Page E6 Thursday.

THE ART WORLD

THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

The case for promiscuity at the Guggenheim.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Before the movies, painting was like the movies. One went out to see pictures that were gorgeous and glamorous and told appealing stories. Grand group exhibitions—the Salons—were like multiplexes. At any multiplex, there is almost always one film that you are dying to see, two that you would rather die than see, and a bunch of others that will do to pass the time. That bunch of others, which are good enough, mark the movies as a successfully popular art. They are the regular fare that fills in between feasts for people who will dine come what may. No such routine gourmandise attends the middling range of painting now—or, really, of any visual art, whether contemporary or historical. For most of the public, art has come to symbolize the singularly superb, exclusively. I suppose this has to do with the archaic character of the art work, as a unique, hand-made, often hauntingly expensive object, in a world of mass consumption. At any rate, consider the prevalence of the locution "masterpieces of" in so many museum shows—you know, "Masterpieces of Mesoantarctic Lint." We are invited—nay, expected—to obsess moonily about ultimate quality: best, bester, bestest. Painting, which struggles to stay relevant in our present culture, suffers acutely from such fetishism.

This summer's most controversial show, "1900: Art at the Crossroads," at the Guggenheim—it has been up for two months and will run until September 10th—exposes a crisis in the life of art. The show assembles approximately two hundred and fifty paintings and sculptures from a cluster of years around 1900, when the World's Fair, in Paris, displayed the art of twenty-nine countries. Several hands took part in curating "1900," but it is properly regarded as the brainchild of Robert Rosenblum, a professor of fine arts at New York University and the doyen of let's-love-practically-everything revisionism in art history. Rosenblum's books, which are alternately majestic and mischievous, range from "Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: From Friedrich to Rothko" to "The Dog in Art: From Rococo to Post-Modernism." He was gamely picking at canonical modernism before that tendentious regime collapsed of its own overstrained weight—a bit like the Soviet Union. If, after all, the story of modern art is something less than a moral allegory—progressive virtue versus reactionary evil—why not admit the charms of, say, the vanquished William-Adolphe Bouguereau? This academic superstar—whose sleek, maudlin, semi-pornographic confections were coveted by American millionaires at the turn of the nineteenth century—is campy fun, no? Shouldn't art be fun? Rosenblum's winsome avidity, backed by powerful scholarship, drives sobersided intellectuals nuts. He has kept coming through all the attacks on him, like Godzilla advancing on Tokyo. By now Tokyo is in sad shape.

The show "1900" revives the spirit of the turn-of-the-century World's Fair, in Paris, when looking at art was like going to the movies. Photograph by Jason Schmidt.

Like other art people I know—and like Michael Kimmelman, in the *Times*, and Hilton Kramer, in the *Observer*—I rather despised "1900" on my first visit. What's the point in playing fair with the mildewed academic platitudes and provincial swoons that dominate the show? Interpolated gems by Cézanne, Degas, Munch, Klimt, and other heroes of modernity seemed to me tormented by the context, like aristocrats at a tractor pull. On a second visit, I relaxed. I accepted the show's challenge to be viewed in the way that someone of a century ago might have viewed it—as the complicated efflorescence of a changing world and, not incidentally, as an entertainment. Something happened to me in the Guggenheim's anteroom near the bottom of the ramp. Hung salon style with paintings that appeared at the World's Fair, the room gave me my multiplex analogy: aggressively ingratiating pictures with major production values, competing to tempt the public palate. Suddenly, a judgmental attitude felt absurd—as if one attended a ballgame only to keep score. At the very least, the show offers a sort of archeology of pleasure. Why did folks like this stuff? Trying to

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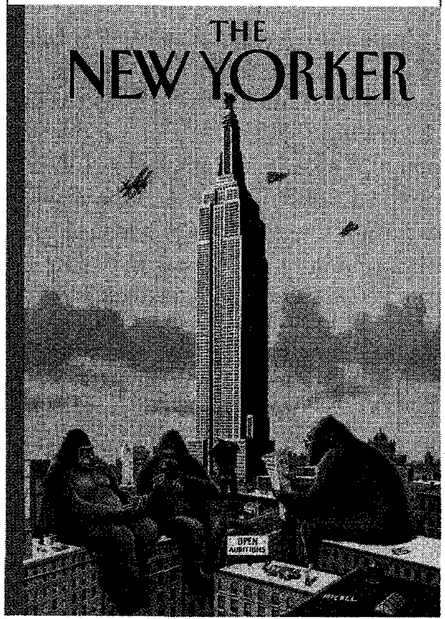

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imagine an answer, I slipped into the popcorn satisfactions of a second-rate (so much better than third-rate) Hollywood product. I ended up enjoying almost everything—except Bouguereau, whose toothsomely eroticized children should have got him punched in the face, if not arrested.

Context really counts. Great art may be partly characterized by what it rejects from its milieu, but not by what it builds a wall against. One of the ways in which museums sterilize great art of the past is by isolating it from the fashions of its time. It's the greatest-hits fallacy—that we understand creativity by focussing strictly on the peaks. Without valleys, peaks could be pimples. So goes one revisionist rationale, which I'm inclined to endorse. This principle happens not to be advanced by "1900," whose wall labels and catalogue ponderously spell out sociological and intellectual themes. An unaesthetic, educational spirit rules. There is an emphasis on curios: a proto-Dadaist jape by the arch-academician Jean-Léon Gérôme, a Portuguese painting of a semi-nude nymph who is distressed by industrial pollution, and a triptych by Léon Fréderic in which hundreds of bare-assed children swarm over waterfalls and sleep in heaps on the shore. (This last is dully painted, alas: great concept, lame cinematography.)

For me, the show's keenest finds are wonderful instances of regional Naturalism and Symbolism, notably from the Nordic countries, which remind us that such artists as Harriet Backer, Prince Eugen, and Magnus Enckell were contemporaries of Ibsen and Strindberg. America's Winslow Homer shines in this company—which suggests an art house, next door to the multiplex, for subtitled and indie films. But I'm interested less by the show's intermittent joys than by the issues that it raises about taste.

In 1900 and throughout most of the century that followed, there were clearly distinct conservative and radical tastes in art. One knew what one liked, or one liked what one dared to. This tension was fertile. Superior art is always both conservative and radical, in a ratio that takes time to be recognized and more time to sink in. A living art culture is an arena of arguments which get resolved in unpredictable ways. Hardly anyone argues about art today. Common taste has fallen hostage to education, which postpones questions of pleasure until a graduation day that never arrives, and to gossip, which lazily tracks the passage of scenes and styles. Education—including the earnest nattering of museum-wall labels and Acoustiguides and the shaming moralism of academic theorists and political scolds—exhausts mental energy to no clear end. Gossip economizes it to a fault; magazine layouts featuring the peekaboo midriffs of raffish girl painters satisfy this year's curiosity about new art. Am I lamenting? I sure am. I accept that the decadence of art taste is low on the global list of current human woes. It's tolerable. But we are in a sorry state when art—the pursuit of higher happiness—succumbs to anxious muddle. Art should be less trouble than it's worth. Today, it accumulates troubles like an experiment in entropy.

The Guggenheim's "1900," an entropic fiesta, points up the problem and contains hints of a solution. Rosenblum's brand of art love vexes me with its levelling embrace of the good, the bad, and the kinky. Liking so much, can one care for anything? But such caprice is a timely antidote to the stultifying ten-best-list mentality in a field where most people's attention flags after the top two or three items. We need to reconstitute the pleasure principle in our experience and public talk of art. Taste—which is pleasure's residue, distilled from many memories—cannot be exercised too often or on objects too lowly.

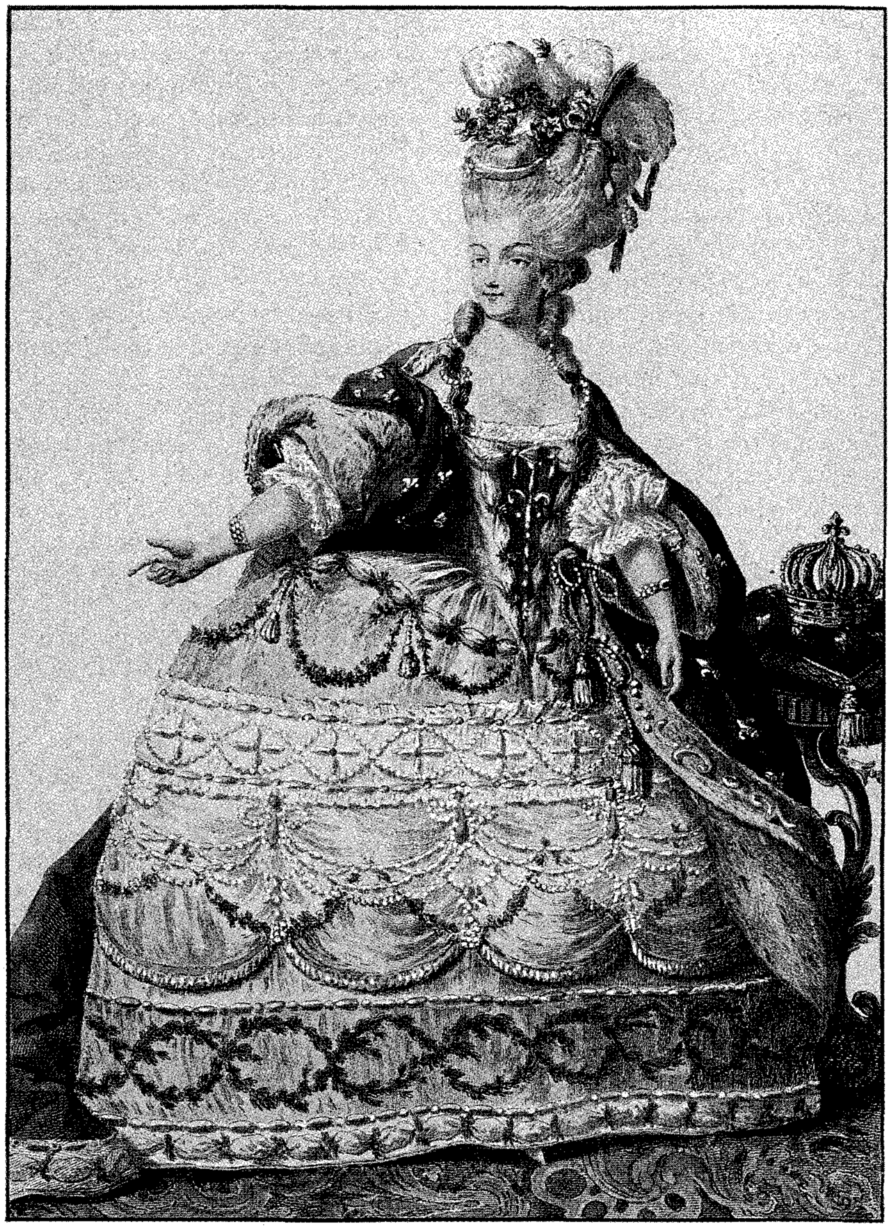
Art works are like people who are mysteriously possessed of a driving will to please us. Perhaps they fail to bring it off—they may be fools, for example—but how can we not be touched? Grateful tact is most in order when the intention succeeds to a degree, but less than wholly. That's where art's engine of pleasure most vividly reveals itself, and where we learn its inner workings and worldly vicissitudes. A cultivated appreciation of the pretty good sets us up to register the surprise of the great, which baffles our understanding and teaches us little except how to praise. Greatness, a bonus for those who are in the game, can occur only when the game is widely and gladly played. ♦

BOOKS

THE CHILD QUEEN

A new biography captures the tragedy of Marie-Antoinette.

BY FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY



The Queen has been portrayed both as a mindless hussy and as a benevolent martyr.

DENY, KUNSTBIBLIOTHEK/AKG

She arrives in Versailles at the age of fourteen, a Dresden figurine of a girl, slender and high-spirited, with china-blue eyes and the most ethereal skin the French court has seen all century. She has been the kind of unruly, tomboyish child who is the despair of many mothers—who refuses to concentrate on her studies, prefers romping through the forest with her friends, and disrupts parties by giggling behind her fan at the silliness of her elders. Archduchess Maria Antonia is also phenomenally uneducated and naïve. The fifteenth child of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, she has been brought up at a court known for its dull simplicity, a familial court where etiquette is minimal and intrigues are rigorously banned, where the principal values instilled in a future Queen are piety and marital and filial subservience. One marvels at the Empress's own naïveté when she launches this rustic, guileless child into Europe's wiliest, most literate aristocracy. In May, 1770, when the girl signs the register that seals her marriage to Dauphin Louis Auguste, grandson of Louis XV and designated heir to the French throne, she leaves a large blotch of ink on the page. Marie-Antoinette, as she is called in France, can barely write her name.

The fellow who inscribes his name beside hers, and who within a few days will share her bed, is already a bit plump and quite tall for the times (five feet ten), has short-sighted, gentle blue eyes, and waddles as he walks. His pathological shyness is traceable to a wretched childhood: unloved by his parents, who favored his handsome, brilliant older brother, he was orphaned at the age of ten, and was later haughtily ignored by his overbearing grandfather. One of the better-educated men at court, an accomplished Latin scholar, and an avid student of history and science, the gauche, reclusive fifteen-year-old Dauphin is painfully ill at ease in society, and happiest in his library or his saddle. Despite armies of valets and attendants, the future Louis XVI is also notorious for his untidiness, frequently appearing at court with missing waistcoat buttons or wig powder on his shoulders, his hands darkened by the forge where he pursues his solitary and favorite avocation, the making of locks and keys.

As the distinguished French historian Evelyne Lever reminds us in her fine new biography, "Marie-Antoinette: The Last Queen of France," translated from the French by Catherine Temerson (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30), France has not had a popular queen in centuries: Marie de Médicis and Anne of Austria were detested; the pious, austere consorts of Louis XIV and XV were dismissed as washouts. However ungainly the Dauphin may seem, the citizenry, fed up with Louis XV's corrupt rule, is ready to adore the new monarch and his exquisite bride; he is called Louis le Désiré. During the festivities that attend the royal marriage, the couple is greeted everywhere with ovations. The nuptial Mass is followed by the wedding banquet; finally, the kids get into bed. The curtains of the bed are closed, then opened, then closed again, a vestige of those earlier times when witnesses were asked to certify that the act of penetration had actually taken place. After exchanging a few remarks, perhaps, the bridegroom turns his back on his bride and goes to sleep. "Nothing," he records in his diary the following day.

"Nothing happened!" spies from Spain, Prussia, from every corner of Europe report that very week to their own monarchs, having bribed servants to provide a chronicle on the condition of the royal sheets. "Still nothing!" they will continue to report for an amazing seven years, seven years of deep humiliation for the Dauphin and of torture for Marie-Antoinette, during which Louis XV dies and they become King and Queen of France, their marriage still unconsummated.

This was a time when the royal body was one with the body politic, when the virility of a royal organ was a national obsession and a matter of international concern. Lever is particularly skillful at describing the highly charged dynastic expectations that attended Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette's marriage, and deftly prepares us for the following act of sexual sleuthing: seven years into the union, Marie-Antoinette's older brother, the twice-widowed Emperor Joseph II, decided to investigate a "nuptial predicament" that was threatening the very balance of power in Europe. Informed with striking candor by both spouses, he sent a bulletin back to his brother in Vienna: "[The King] has normal erections; he introduces his member, stays there without moving for about two minutes, then withdraws without ejaculating, and still erect, bids good night. This is incomprehensible because he sometimes has nocturnal emissions, but while inside and in the process, never. . . . Oh, if I could only have been present once, I would have taken care of him; he should be whipped so that he would discharge sperm like a donkey. . . . Together they are two complete fumblers."

Just fumblers. For the kind, maladroit Louis was not impotent; he merely suffered from an ailment called phimosis, a condition of the foreskin which makes erections painful but is curable by a simple incision, and which he had been too lethargic to fix. Emperor Joseph II apparently persuaded his brother-in-law to have the required surgery. Within four months of his visit, the King went to the Queen's boudoir (this was not an era of privacy; the event is reported to have occurred on August 18, 1777, at 10 A.M.) and finally accomplished what Joseph called "the great act." The Queen celebrated her new marital bliss by giving a fête for the King at which she dressed as a café keeper and served beverages. The following spring, she was pregnant with her first child, a daughter. And with the birth of three more children, two of them boys, to whom they were devoted, the royal couple had secured the triumphant continuation—or so they thought—of the Bourbon dynasty. But by that time the years of barrenness had done irreparable harm.

Lever offers many insights into the French Queen's unique vulnerability. Foreign consorts, especially comely ones, have seldom had an easy time anywhere, and Lever points out that Marie-Antoinette entered public life at a moment when the French were exceptionally hostile to Austria. In 1756, the year after she was born, Austria had persuaded France, its ancient enemy, to join a coalition against Prussia and England. The result was the Seven Years' War, which ended in a resounding defeat for France. Humiliated and gravely weakened, stripped of its most lucrative colonies, France blamed Austria as one of the chief sources of its woes. So the first epithet coined for Marie-Antoinette—"L'Autrichienne," a euphemism that originated, like most animosity toward her, in court circles—was already bad news. Moreover, upon marrying the Dauphin she was confronted with a clique of ready-made enemies, the court's powerful anti-Austrian cabal. It included Louis XV's mistress Mme. du Barry, who had the support of some of the country's mightiest nobles; and the treacherous Comte de Provence, the Dauphin's younger brother, who was next in line to the throne as long as the Dauphin remained without a male heir. The bluntness and brutality with which Maria Theresa (and later Joseph II) pressured Marie-Antoinette to protect Austrian interests in France became common knowledge, and provided her enemies with endless opportunities to portray her as a devious, disloyal foreigner.

What did the royal couple's childlessness have to do with the court's anti-Austrian cabal? readers may ask. Everything, Lever has answered. If the King was too sexually deficient to dominate and inseminate his lively young bride, so the schemers of the anti-Austrian cabal soon began to tattle, the Queen was bound to be promiscuous. Sure enough, shortly after Louis XVI's coronation the malicious traits ascribed to du Barry were readily transferred to Marie-Antoinette; she was accused of wantonness, venality, and profligacy, with the added bonus that she was said to have lesbian relations with her favorite, Comtesse de Polignac. Even her pregnancies, which began in 1778, did little to redeem her reputation. According to the illegal pamphlet industry that had begun to flourish in the second half of the century, the paternity of her children was attributable to anyone but the King. By the early seventeen-eighties, the basic repertoire of the lampoons attacking the trusting, impulsive, protocol-hating Queen (published in England for the most part, and probably financed by the Comte de Provence or other members of the anti-Austrian clique) had crystallized. She was a foreign strumpet undermining the nation by manipulating her indecisive husband, she was depleting the treasury by lavish expenditures on such private follies as the Trianon and by extravagant rewards to her minions. In Lever's view, although Marie-Antoinette was pious, chaste if not prudish, and incapable of deceit, the French court's byzantine pattern of intrigues had stacked the cards against her, and no degree of saintliness could have made her invulnerable to attack.

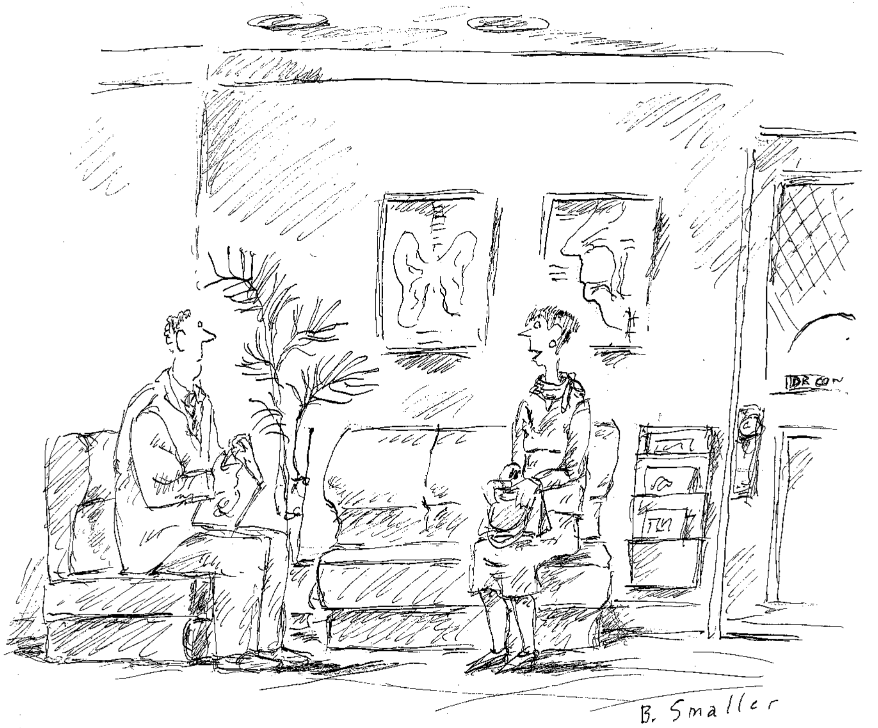
Few historical figures have been more distorted by legend and political bias than Marie-Antoinette. Over the centuries, both sensation-seeking biographers and those sympathetic to the Revolution's bloodiest phases have depicted her as a mindless hussy, while those of Royalist sympathies have promoted the image of a benevolent martyr. It is to Lever's credit that she offers a more balanced view of the Queen than most previous biographers, and lucidly analyzes those character flaws which helped to precipitate her downfall. Defying court etiquette at every step, impetuously hugging those she loved and icily snubbing those she disliked, Marie-Antoinette was as tactless as she was spontaneous, and early antagonized the very nobles whose support might have helped to save the monarchy. She was of an innately melancholy nature, and her undeniable frivolity—her whirlwind of costume balls, gambling parties, and fêtes of all kinds, for which she was severely scolded by her family in Vienna—seems to have allayed her frequent bouts of depression. Her passion for diamonds and the prodigality with which she rewarded her notoriously rapacious and corrupt favorites, particularly the Polignacs, are less excusable. And the taciturn King, who relieved his own frustrations by spending most of his free time at the hunt, satisfied her whims all the more eagerly because of remorse concerning his initial sexual inadequacy. By the seventeen-eighties, Marie-Antoinette had earned the epithet "Madame Deficit."

As for attempts by the Queen to gain political clout at court, Lever makes it clear that they were calamitous. Her involvement in one of the King's fatal mistakes—the firing of the brilliant reformist minister Turgot, who might well have avoided the demise of the monarchy by revitalizing France's disastrous finances—is only one of many ignorant misjudgments, most of them dictated by her relatives in Vienna, which eventually led her to be seen as a traitor. She underestimated, even more than her husband, the democratic forces unleashed in France in the second half of the eighteenth century, and only abetted his political delusions. ("Nothing," he recorded in his diary for the events of July 14, 1789.) Whereas Louis was not averse to some mildly proto-liberal ideals, and might eventually have been swayed to compromise on a British-style constitutional monarchy, Marie-Antoinette was an unremitting autocrat, the leader of that reactionary clique which refused any alliance between the crown and bourgeois reformers. Come the Revolution, her relentless opposition to most measures being passed by France's new legislative bodies led her to acquire another epithet, "Madame Veto." And it was no help that the great love of her life, Count Axel Fersen, was an equally ardent believer in the divine right of monarchs.

Marie-Antoinette's relationship with Fersen, a tall, dashing heartthrob born into Sweden's high nobility, has always been the most intensely disputed aspect of her story. They met at a masked ball at the Paris Opéra shortly before she became Queen, when they were both eighteen. He was entranced by her warmth and her childlike naturalness. She was taken with his lack of affectation, and, like most women in Paris, with his proud reserve, his air of melancholy mystery. After a pristine, on-and-off dalliance interrupted by Fersen's long absences in the nascent United States, where he served as Rochambeau's aide-de-camp in the War of Independence, in 1783 they resumed what seemed to be, at the very least, an intimate friendship.

Speculation concerning this relationship has been rife because there are so few firsthand documents: the extremely discreet Fersen seems to have destroyed all of his correspondence with the Queen, and also those of his journals which covered the period from 1776 to 1791. Nineteenth-century Republicans of Michelet's generation were capable of ascribing to Marie-Antoinette a dozen lovers. In the same era, writers of Royalist leanings claimed that she was far too virtuous to capitulate to the Swede's passion. Post-Freudians of the Stefan Zweig generation upheld the contrary—how could such a frustrated, lonely beauty not give in to one of the eighteenth century's most seductive swains? Curiously, Lever remains closer to the nineteenth-century Royalist camp than to the modern one, and her complex view of Fersen informs some of her most rewarding pages. She believes that Fersen and the Queen did not become lovers until the very end of their relationship, and bases her opinion on Fersen's character rather than on Marie-Antoinette's. Emphasizing his conservative, monarchical streak, she states that "he tended to see her as a sovereign who had deigned to glance at him and not as a lovelorn, pathetic woman who was incapable of hiding her feelings." As for Fersen's worshipful rhetoric ("I cannot belong to the only person to whom I want to belong . . . and so I do not want to belong to anyone," he wrote to his sister, clearly implying the Queen's unattainability), Lever sees it as an expression of exalted troubadour love. In sum, she views their correspondence as an exchange between "a sentimental young queen and an aristocrat who revered sovereigns as though they were gods."

Lever makes it clear that, whether or not they took each other to bed, Fersen's place in the Queen's life was unique because of his disinterestedness. He was the only one of her intimates who received no great advantage from being in her circle; his passion for her, in fact, grew in measure with the desperation of her fate. Seemingly accepted by the placid King as his wife's official lover (Louis XVI was shrewd enough to realize that Fersen allayed Marie-Antoinette's growing isolation), he would be closely linked to her



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destiny for the rest of her days. He witnessed most stages of the Diamond Necklace Affair, a sordid intrigue led by a gang of demimonde swindlers which implicated the Queen in the underhanded acquisition of the most expensive necklace in Europe. (Although she was innocent, she emerged from the imbroglio so thoroughly despised that she could barely leave the palace anymore.) Fersen was also at Versailles throughout the sad summer of 1789, when increasingly venomous lampoons began accusing Marie-Antoinette, as Lever puts it, "of wanting the people to starve and the patriots' blood to flow." He was with the royal retinue on that terrifying day in October, 1789, three months after the fall of the Bastille, when a mob of some six or seven thousand citizens, the great majority of them women, marched on Versailles to bring the royal family back to Paris, where they were soon made virtual prisoners.

But Fersen's role as royal paramour was also unique because he seemed to be as devoted to the genial, vacillating King, and to the general cause of absolute monarchy, as he was to the Queen. In June, 1791, he single-handedly masterminded the royal family's fatal flight to Varennes, an elaborate escape plan that went awry through the participants' bumbling and their lack of political realism. Disguised as commoners, the monarchs and their party, which comprised the King's younger sister Mme. Élisabeth, the five-year-old Dauphin, and the twelve-year-old Princess Marie-Thérèse, travelled in a large carriage, together with three bodyguards and a governess. (Lever is marvellous throughout at describing details of the Queen's décor and toilette, and tells us that the all too conspicuous escape vehicle, luxuriously upholstered in white Utrecht velvet, had green morocco-leather seats and curtains of matching taffeta.)

The final meeting between Fersen and the Queen, and the one best documented in his journals, took place in February, 1792, a few months before the factions that wished to get rid of the monarchy altogether took over the Revolution. Fersen, travelling incognito, slipped into the Tuileries one evening and spent twenty-four hours with the Queen in her quarters before seeing the King at 6 P.M. the following day. Few historians have doubted that if the inamorati had not consummated their love before, they did so that night. The rest of the episode, related by Lever with its full weight of irony, displays Fersen's less admirable side: whatever his powers of devotion, he was also a ferocious ladies' man. Having told Marie-Antoinette that he was leaving straightaway for Spain, he went instead to spend a week at the home of his mistress, Éléanore Sullivan, a well-connected Englishwoman with whom, unbeknownst to the Queen, he had been having an affair for some time.

Lever movingly narrates the end of the royal family's saga: their increasingly brutal imprisonment at the Temple after the August, 1792, insurrection; the massacres that followed; the episode of bloodcurdling sadism in which the Queen was shown the severed head of one of her closest friends, the Princesse de Lamballe; and the execution of the King and Queen. On October 16, 1793, when Marie-Antoinette of France, now "widow Capet," was taken from her cell at the Conciergerie, she was brought to the scaffold not in a closed vehicle, as her husband had been eight months earlier, but in a common farm cart not much larger than a wheelbarrow, exposed to the jeers of the tens of thousands of citizens who thronged the streets of Paris for the occasion. A henchman of the executioner who led her to the guillotine on Place de la Révolution (now Place de la Concorde) had tied a rope around her wrist, as one would on a farm animal. But even this final indignity she tolerated impassively, without comment or complaint. Standing at a corner of what is now the Rue Saint-Honoré, the painter David, who as a member of the Comité de Sûreté Générale had had a voice in convicting her of high treason, sketched the final likeness of the emaciated, silver-haired, barely recognizable Queen, her head held very, very high, that unforgettable Hapsburg lip still haughty and a bit disdainful. "*Vive la République!*" the mob shouted when the blade fell, at 12:15 P.M.

The little Dauphin, DNA tests have recently certified, died in jail two years later, of abominable neglect. His sister, Mme. Royale, survived, and lived on into the mid-nineteenth century. Count Fersen, who before his own violent death made many other female conquests but never married (he was assassinated in Stockholm in 1810), mourned Marie-Antoinette for the rest of his days. "Feeling, interest, existence, everything was joined in her and all was lost," he wrote in the weeks after she died. "What gentleness, what tenderness, what kindness, what care, what a loving, sensitive, tactful heart!"

Lever's biography is meticulous but highly traditional. Those who favor a broader, more gendered historical perspective may be disconcerted by its failure to explore the larger psychosexual dynamics of the period. She neglects to analyze, for instance, the radical shift in sexual politics and imagery that occurred in the transition from the ancien régime to the Republic. What forces in the French communal psyche, one might well ask, fuelled the violently sexist and often pornographic rhetoric that ascribed obscene debaucheries to the prudish Marie-Antoinette, and created such metaphors for her as "she-wolf," "tigress," "hyena," "daughter of Satan"? Is it any wonder that the gynophobic rhetoric that attended the Queen's conviction and death coincided with the Jacobins' campaign to expel women from most political activities? Equally disappointing is the treatment of the biography's American edition. It has been reduced to about half the French original and, in the course of cutting and translation, has suffered a severe dumbing-down, with impoverishing effects on the book's psychological nuances. The American version—chopped up, apparently for some hypothetically inattentive reader, into short, seven-to-nine-page chapters—feels, in its more condescendingly simplistic passages, like a Marie-Antoinette primer for high-school students. Francophone readers are well advised to return to the dense, detailed original for a fabulous read rather than settle for a merely good one.

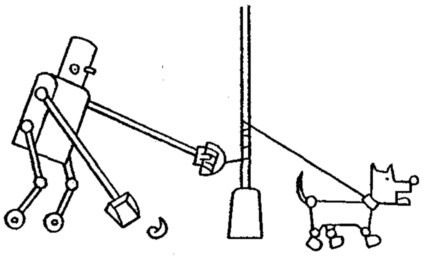
However, these flaws do not greatly detract from Lever's achievement: with more than customary perception, she has chronicled Marie-Antoinette's transformation from a hapless party girl into a rather admirable woman. Having grown to cherish her husband's kindness, forthrightness, and loyalty, the Queen impressed her jailers with her gentle, self-effacing, compassionate manner, her fortitude, and her consummate marital and maternal devotion. Lever particularly succeeds in communicating the following irony: Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were individuals of average, if not mediocre, intelligence and appetites who through the majesty of historical forces, and their own stoical acceptance of death, became endowed with a certain nobility and grandeur. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Boxer Rebellion, *by Diana Preston (Walker; $28).* This enthralling history looks back to the heyday of imperialism and forward to our present reliance on multinational forces. The Boxers, Chinese peasants who blamed foreigners for the dislocation of their lives, began by murdering missionaries and converts and destroying railroad and telegraph lines in the countryside. Gaining strength, they besieged the foreign quarters of Tientsin and Peking until European and Japanese troops came to the rescue. Although the foreign powers coöperated to end the conflict, contemporary diaries and memoirs reflect the unflattering stereotypes each national group held of every other; with hindsight, after a century of war, we can appreciate the costs of political incorrectness.

Free for All, *by Peter Wayner (HarperBusiness; $26).* When Microsoft told the Justice Department that it considered Linux a competitive threat, most people had a good laugh. These days, the joke is wearing thin. Linux—an operating system that's free and owned by no one—is at the center of an "open source" software movement that is spreading like dandelions. In an entertaining, unabashedly partisan chronicle of that movement, the author presents such memorable characters as Richard Stallman, the programming wiz who was an early advocate of free software, and his mild-mannered Finnish disciple Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux. If you've ever wondered why anyone would give away perfectly good code, you now have a place to turn for enlightenment.

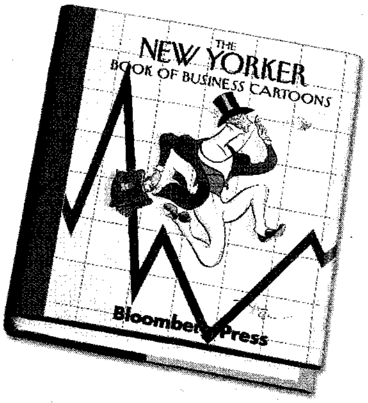
Can't You Hear Me Callin', *by Richard D. Smith (Little, Brown; $25.95).* Bill Monroe, the mandolin virtuoso and legendary father of bluegrass music, transformed the isolation of his rural Kentucky childhood into a trademark "high, lonesome" sound. One of the stars of the Grand Ole Opry (from which he began broadcasting in 1939), Monroe discovered and nurtured such talents as Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. If at times the author seems too reverent, he doesn't paper over unpleasantness. Monroe could be intimidating and aloof, and was capable of bearing a grudge for decades; he was also a compulsive skirt-chaser. The book is most winning in its evocation of Monroe's early days, when his travelling act included vaudeville routines and a band that doubled as a semi-pro baseball team.



Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource, *by Marq de Villiers (Houghton Mifflin; $26).* The author's argument here is exceptionally persuasive because he does not scold or inveigh but lucidly and readably reports: that, for example, more than a billion people lack clean drinking water, and that since usable water is finite, the worldwide water shortage will grow as long as the population continues to increase. The facts are grim—the Danube is polluted by untreated sewage, and the Ogallala Aquifer, on which the American West depends, may be exhausted in twenty years—but de Villiers does not despair, and he closes with a chapter on remedies.

Little Saint, *by Hannah Green (Random House; $25.95).* In 1975, the writer Hannah Green visited the small French village of Conques, where much of life still centered on Sainte Foy, who was martyred by the Romans in the year 303 at the age of twelve, and whose relics are encased in a bejewelled gold statue in the church. Green, brought up as a Protestant, and "a stranger to saints," was transported by her encounter with Sainte Foy. This book, which she worked on for the rest of her life, and which was published after her death, is not only a record of religious experience but a rapturous hymn to the saint and her devoted villagers.

Very funny business, indeed!



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DANCING

SOUL ON ICE

The Bolshoi, ten years later.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Courtesy of the Lincoln Center Festival, Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet just returned to New York for the first time in ten years, and, as always, New York came out to see the company—indeed, bought up every last ticket for the seven performances, and clapped and hollered and shot off flash cameras during the show. No need to ask why. Some of these people may have been applauding for the Bolshoi's name, or for their memories—of Galina Ulanova, at the old Met in 1959, tearing across the stage, her mantle rippling behind her, in Leonid Lavrovsky's "Romeo and Juliet"; of Vladimir Vasiliev, all chest, exhorting the slaves to rebellion in Yuri Grigorovich's "Spartacus" during the 1975 tour; of Alexander Godunov, his blond bob flying, covering the stage in three leaps in that same "Spartacus," and then defecting a few days later, during the 1979 tour. There's something called Russian ballet that people, rightly, are sentimental about. Beyond that, there's something called Bolshoi, the Hollywood version of Russian ballet—the saga of soul-versus-society, and of the soul's defeat, and its ultimate victory—that people are simply nuts about.

The "soulfulness" of the Bolshoi has its roots in nineteenth-century Russian culture, in the utterly forthright address of spiritual questions—Is there a God? If I lose everything I hoped for, do I have anything left? What is the meaning of life?—that still leaves readers of Tolstoy and Chekhov gasping for breath. The questions were cheapened by the Revolution, but they lived on, and had an honored place at the Bolshoi. Leningrad's Kirov also looked to the spirit, but through symbols, through style. The Bolshoi gave the impression of a more unmediated, more woken-up-in-the-middle-of-the-night sincerity. Under the long directorship of Yuri Grigorovich (1964-95), sincerity was the specialty of the company's male dancers in particular, and male dancers—Vasiliev, Maris Liepa, Alexei Fadeyechev, Godunov, Irek Mukhamedov—were the specialty of the company.

Grigorovich's late years were a nasty spectacle, with many important people, including his former protégé Vasiliev and the great ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, calling for his removal. His ballets looked like Soviet poster art, as some people had the courage to point out. Furthermore, he was slacking off—he hadn't made a new full-length ballet, however bad, since 1982. In 1995, after the fall of the Soviet Union, he was finally forced out, and, as usual in such situations, chaos followed. From 1995 to 1998, three years, the ballet troupe had three directors. Now, for the moment, the dust has settled, and there is some hope that the Bolshoi may begin rescuing the soul from the tripe, for the people who have taken Grigorovich's place are two of the company's foremost souls. Vasiliev was appointed general and artistic director of the Bolshoi Theatre (all departments) in 1995; Fadeyechev came on as artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet in 1998.

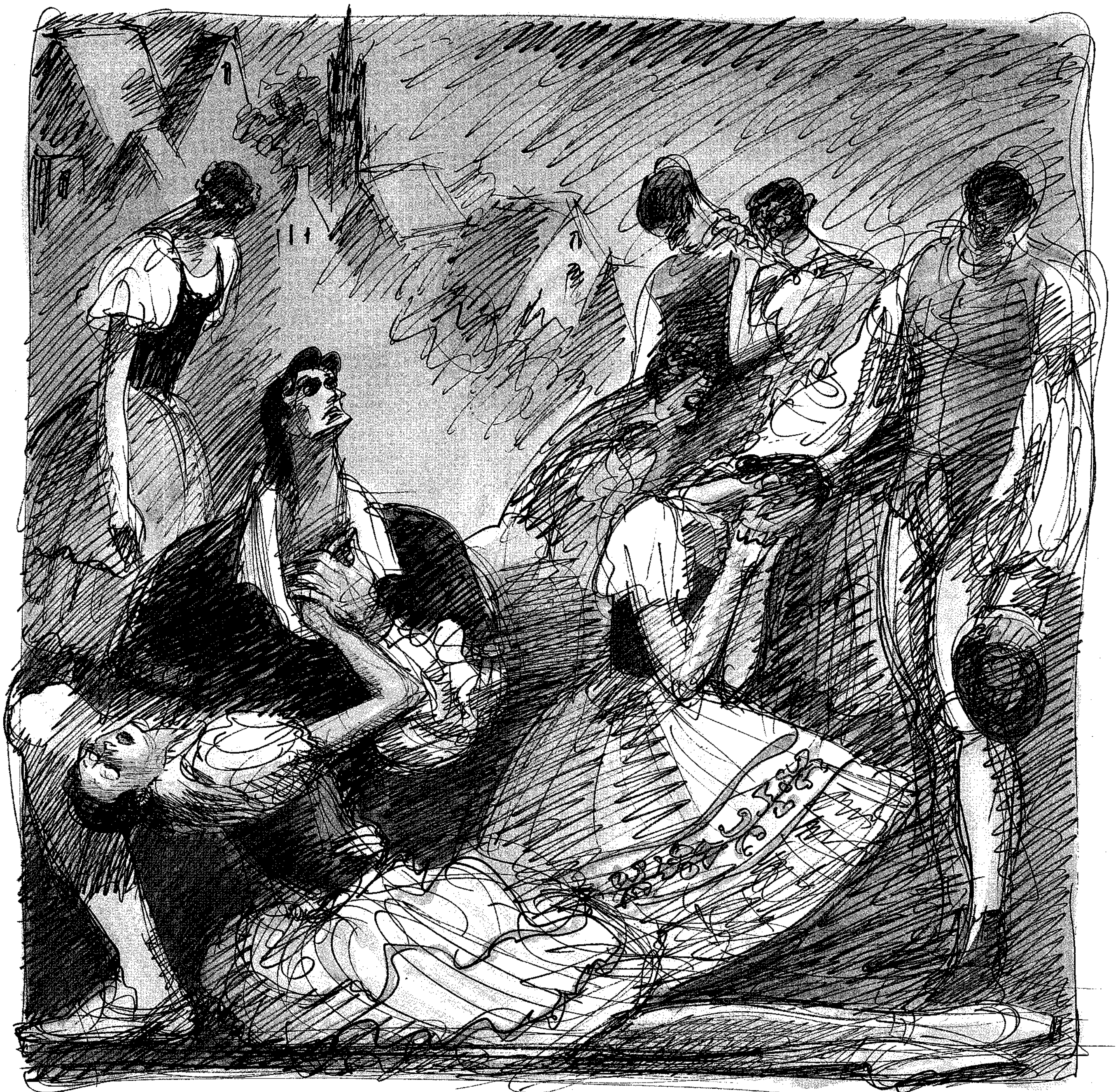
In terms of technique, the company is not in great shape. Nor, apparently, is the school, as Fadeyechev, who probably speaks too freely for his own good, admitted to *DanceView* in 1999. ("The last school examination that we attended scared me a great deal," he said.) Of the three young men who led the Lincoln Center season, not one is a finished classical dancer. Sergei Filin, though handsome and stylish, needs to get a lot stronger. Andrei Uvarov, a tall, open-faced guy—he looks like the young Van Cliburn—does not have a pretty line, and he doesn't plié when he lands. Nikolai Tsiskaridze, a big, grinning Georgian, has a lovely jump, but in smaller steps he takes a long time to figure out where his feet are supposed to be. As Fadeyechev pointed out in his interview, a problem for these young dancers is that they lack models. The dancers just senior to them were the glasnost generation, and off they went, as soon as they could pack their bags, to make

EDWARD SOREL

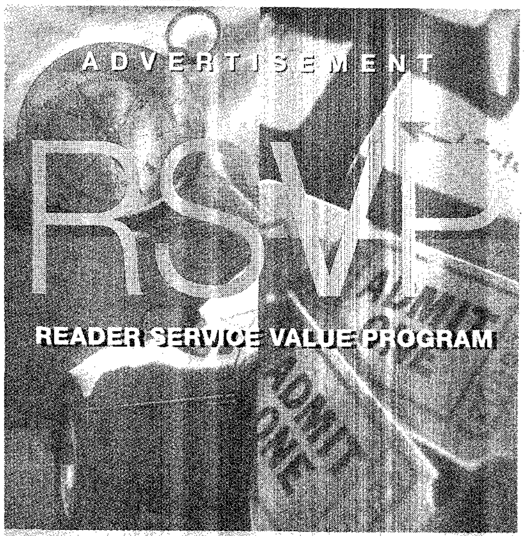
some money in the West. And, because of that void, the youngsters were promoted too fast. They are learning on the job, and that's what we watched, with occasional bewilderment, at the State Theatre. Nevertheless—and here we must thank their new bosses—they still have that Bolshoi earnestness, and you loved them for it. I loved Filin in particular. He was immensely noble; he could dismiss his squire just by raising his nose.

The women were more of a mystery, and one that I'm not sure we even took stock of, because so many of the lead-female slots were occupied by only one dancer, Nina Ananiashvili. Ananiashvili is not an up-and-comer; she is thirty-six. Furthermore, as part of the glasnost-sprung generation, she has been performing in the West for many years. (She's been a principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre, meanwhile dancing at the Bolshoi, too, since 1993.) So why was she allowed to hog the season—a season in which, given the Bolshoi's ten-year absence, we were dying to see the new dancers? According to one insider, Ananiashvili's salary for the tour was separately subsidized. If so, the company got a financial break by featuring her. And because she is known in New York, the directors may have felt she'd goose up sales. Anyway, she danced two of the four "Giselle"s, and in the mixed bill she got all the performances of the "Don Quixote" pas de deux and of the second movement of Balanchine's "Symphony in C." She does a good, gutsy Giselle—I cried when she died—but elsewhere she tended to fall into the nail-that-step pomposity that is the downside of Bolshoi grandeur. In "Symphony in C," she was actually bad, her face a plaster mask of tragedy, her gestures all Grand Ballerina in Extremis.

In what little we were allowed to see of the other women, there was some good news. The young soloist Maria Alexan-



Sergei Filin, left, as Albrecht, holds Nina Ananiashvili, who does a good, gutsy Giselle.



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GREEN HILLS

Their green flanks
and swells are not
flesh in any sense
matching ours,
we tell ourselves.
Nor their green
breast nor their
green shoulder nor
the languor of their
rolling over.

—*Kay Ryan*

drova has a jump so astonishing that when, as Myrtha in the opening-night "Giselle," she did her big running leaps down the stage, she set off a wave of involuntary vocalization ("Holy shit!") in my section of the audience. Svetlana Lunkina, whom Fadeyechev has called "the hope of the company," didn't turn up until late in the week (she twisted her ankle in rehearsal); she has clear, sparkling feet. But the glory of the lead-female ranks was Galina Stepanenko as Nikiya in the "Kingdom of the Shades" scene from Petipa's "La Bayadère." Stepanenko is not beautiful; she's not glamorous; she's not a big personality. But what a dancer! Few things in the classical repertory are harder than the role of Nikiya in the "Kingdom of the Shades." The ballerina has to jump hurdle after hurdle, and I've seen accomplished dancers pack it in around the third. Stepanenko did everything—the huge grands battements ronds de jambe, the ankle-killing relevés in the scarf dance, the triple pirouettes into arabesque, the stage-circling tours jetés, the final, rat-a-tat-tat soutenu turns—as securely as she first stepped onto the stage. Severe she was, but she made you glad of it. Actually, Stepanenko has some charm. She showed it to us in "Symphony in C"—a little smile, a little jazz. But the great thing was her "Shades": the ballet steps, the ballet meanings—Platonic, fixed, like the stars—and this Russian girl, with the cheekbones, up there making these miracles.

The season's repertory was utterly unadventurous. All we got was "Giselle," which is practically the oldest ballet in the world, and, on the mixed bill, the "Don Quixote" pas de deux, the "Shades," "Symphony in C," and a scene from "Spartacus." "Symphony in C" was there to tell us that Soviet isolation is over, that the Bolshoi is acquiring Balanchine's work, and can actually perform it. (But the company also has Balanchine's "Mozartiana" and "Agon." Why bring "Symphony in C," which we just saw the Kirov perform?) The "Don Q." gave us the Bolshoi slam-bang: the screw-gun pirouettes, the whipping fouettés. The "Spartacus" excerpt was to remind us of Grigorovich's glory days. (I'd as soon forget.) The "Shades" was to let us know that the company can still handle pure classicism, the old-time religion.

As for the "Giselle," it's Vasiliev's new (1997) production, and he wanted us to see it. It's not just his, of course. The program describes the situation accurately—"Choreography: Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot, Marius Petipa, Alexander Gorsky, Leonid Lavrovsky, Vladimir Vasiliev." In other words, what we have here is the original, 1841, Paris Opéra choreography by Coralli and Perrot, plus the

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revisions (grander ensemble work, probably) introduced by Petipa in St. Petersburg in 1884, plus the fiddling (more acting) done by Gorsky in Moscow in 1907 and later, plus Lavrovsky's contributions (more romanticism) in his 1944 Moscow version, plus Vasiliev's recent additions. These last involve a lot of male bravura, in the Grigorovich tradition. Unfortunately, they do not involve restoration of the nineteenth-century mime passages, which were dumped from Russian productions years ago. During the mime music the dancers still just stand around looking dazed, as if they were having a joint cardiovascular accident. Or they hug. One night I thought that if Giselle hugged her mother one more time, I would run up onstage and strangle her.

So, like most modern productions of nineteenth-century ballets, this "Giselle" is a palimpsest. It's also sort of a mess. Albrecht, especially as performed by Filin, is the perfect old-fashioned *danseur noble*, like a god in one of Louis XIV's dance pageants. And next to him we have Hilarion, Giselle's other suitor, storming around and shaking his fists like something out of a *fotonovela*. On the one hand, we have Giselle, who, according to the title, is the subject of the ballet; on the other hand, we have Vasiliev beefing up the men's roles right and left. In the last moments of the ballet, the supposedly heart-shredded Albrecht manages to get up off his knees and uncork a cyclone of barrel turns before the curtain falls.

Take all that as a symbol. Realism versus "formalism," low-class "heart" versus high-class hermetics: these are things that Western choreographers have pondered. But in Russia they are more pressing matters, questions that have decided whether artists could have a car, an apartment, or, indeed, a job. If, in Vasiliev's "Giselle," just about everything is there, that is because he has just about everything to answer to: the long-ago, ballet past; the recent, political past; the future, and who knows what that will be? According to the grapevine, Vasiliev's job is hanging by a thread. Fadeyechev is on a one-year contract. Strange, to look at a little dancer pulling petals off a daisy and see the careers of serious professionals—people who have given their lives, everything they had, to ballet—on the line. But there it is, Russian history, the thing Vasiliev and Fadeyechev are living through. ♦

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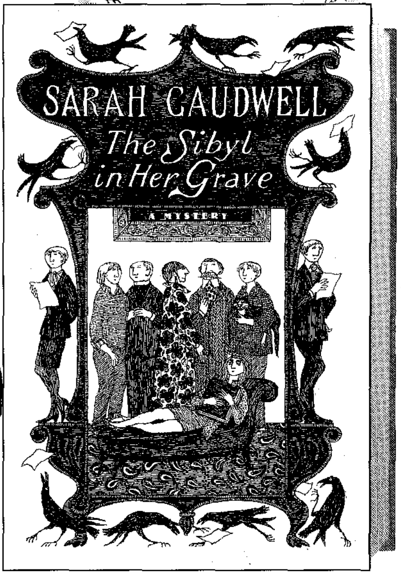

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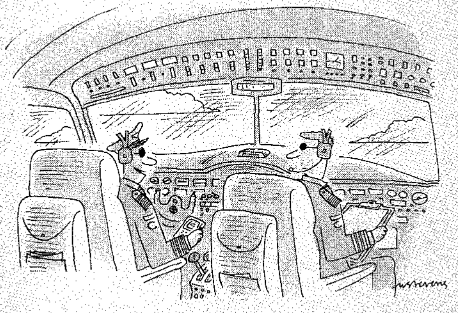

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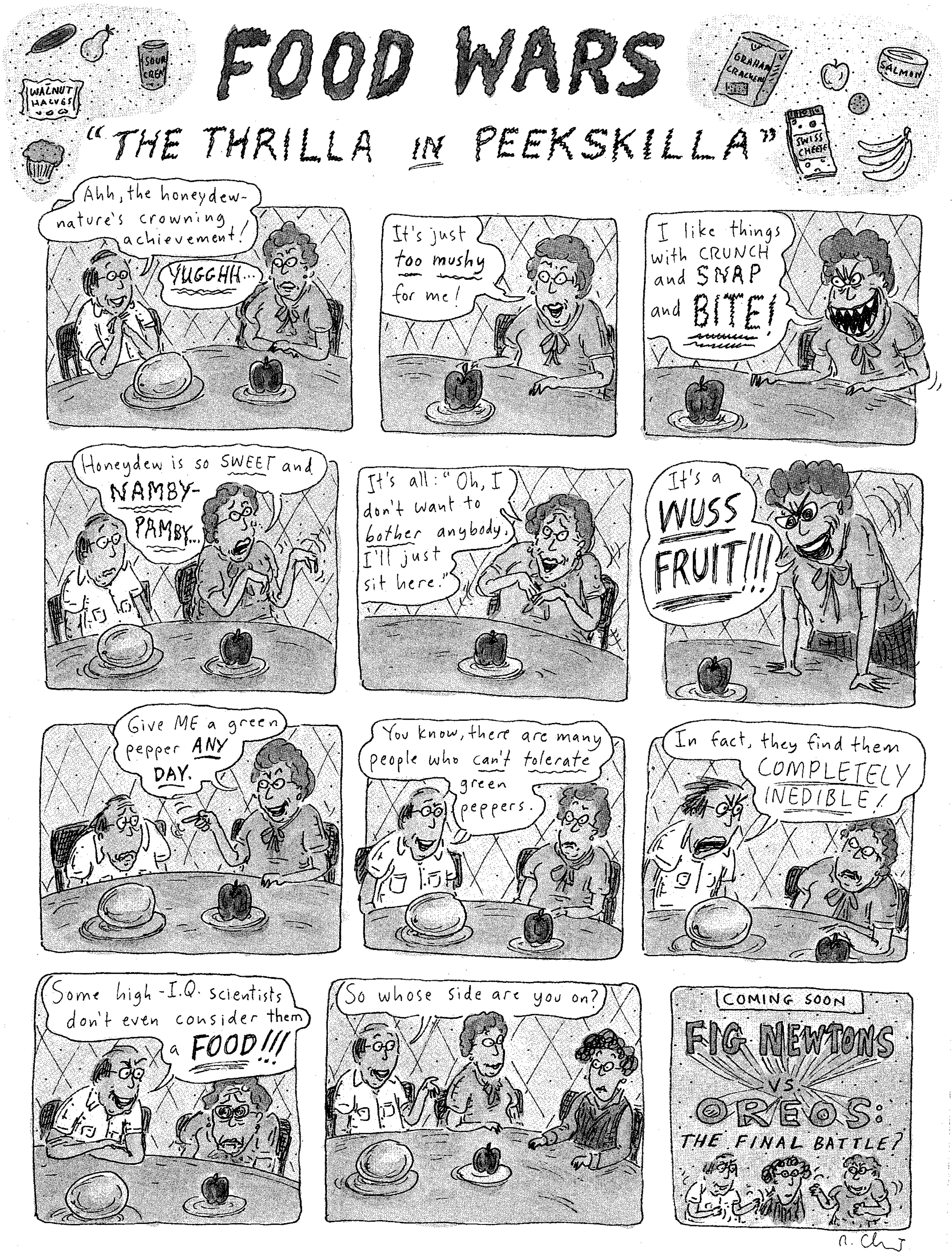
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Ahh, the honeydew—nature's crowning achievement!
YUGGHH...
It's just too mushy for me!
I like things with CRUNCH and SNAP and BITE!
Honeydew is so SWEET and NAMBY-PAMBY...
It's all: "Oh, I don't want to bother anybody. I'll just sit here."
It's a WUSS FRUIT!!!
Give ME a green pepper ANY DAY.
You know, there are many people who can't tolerate green peppers.
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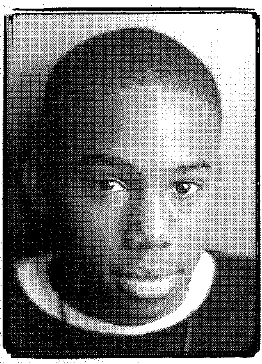
So whose side are you on?
COMING SOON
FIG NEWTONS VS. OREOS: THE FINAL BATTLE?
R. Chast

THEY FINALLY FOUND AN ANSWER TO OVERCROWDED PRISONS. SMALLER PRISONERS.

How small? In Massachusetts it's 14 years old. In Oregon it's 12. Wisconsin, 10. And in some states, there is no age minimum. This is the result of a new "tough on crime" attitude towards juvenile crime. An attitude that encourages individual states to prosecute young children as adults and incarcerate them in adult prisons. These new practices are destroying a century-old system that protects children from contact with adult prisoners.



It is also unfair in that it is minorities that are being targeted. Three out of four youths admitted to adult courts are children of color, despite the fact that most juvenile crimes are committed by whites. Everyday, more and more prosecutors are moving young offenders into the adult court system without any regard to the child's age or circumstance.

One example is Anthony Laster. A mentally disabled 15-year-old who stole $2 from a classmate for food. He was charged as an adult on counts of strong-arm robbery and extortion, which is punishable by a sentence of 30 years to life.

These children are small and vulnerable, and in adult prisons they are the constant victims of rape and violence. One case in Idaho: a 17-year-old boy was jailed for not paying $73 in traffic fines. In the short time he was imprisoned, he was tortured and murdered by adult prisoners.

Another tragedy occurred in Texas. A teenage boy was sent to an adult prison where he was repeatedly raped and beaten by adult inmates. After writing his father, telling him that he was no longer able to tolerate the abuse, he hung himself in his cell. In 1994 alone, 45 children met their deaths in adult prisons, and to this date, the number continues to climb as over 18,000 children are incarcerated annually.

It's been proven that these children are more likely to be physically and sexually abused in adult prisons and are more likely to continue committing crimes after their release.

These harsh laws are not the answer. Not when juvenile crime has been decreasing for the last six years. These laws are unjust and desperately need to be reconsidered. It's wrong to imprison children with adult criminals. Why? The answer is simple. Because they're children. Please support the ACLU.

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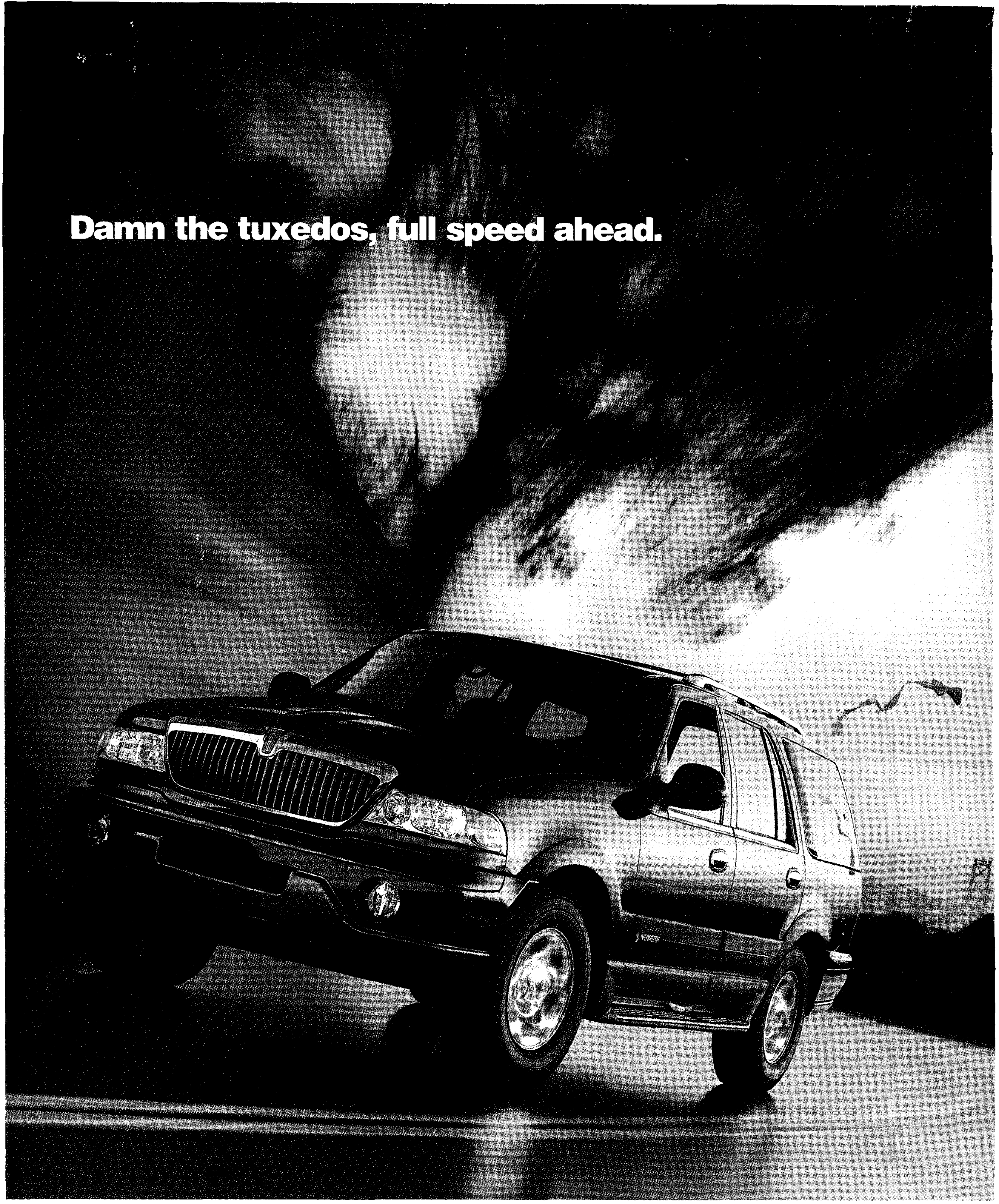

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